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PRRC emerging trends

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Ranks of the 'Born-Again' Faithful Continue to Grow

Nearly 4 in 10 Americans can be classified as "evangelicals" or claim to have had a born-again experience. In the first measurement taken in the 1990s, 38% of those interviewed say that they consider themselves to be evangelicals or to have had a born-again experience.

Trend—Evangelicals

1990	38%
1988	33
1978	35

Born-again Christians are most likely to be encountered in the South, where half of the adult population (51%) describe their beliefs as evangelical in nature. Above-average concentrations of the born-again are also noted among blacks (52%), people who did not graduate from college (44%), and those with annual incomes of under $30,000 (43%).

Protestants (50%) are about three times as likely as Catholics (17%) to describe themselves as evangelicals.

The question is asked as follows:

Would you describe yourself as a "born-again" or evangelical Christian?

The results are based on telephone interviews by The Gallup Poll with a randomly-selected national sample of 1,236 adults, 18 and older, conducted June 15-17, 1990.

Profile: Born-Again Christians

NATIONAL	**38%**
Gender	
Male	36
Female	41
Education	
College graduates	27
Attended college	40
High school grads	39
Non-high school grads	48
Race	
White	37
Black	52
Age	
18-29	36
30-49	38
50 and older	40
Region	
East	29
Midwest	38
South	51
West	32
Income	
$50,000 & over	26
$30,000-$49,999	36
$20,000-$29,999	43
Under $20,000	44
Preference	
Protestant	50
Catholic	17

New Yorkers Nix Cardinal's Censure

NEW YORK—John Cardinal O'Connor made headlines this past summer when he threatened Catholic elected officials with possible excommunication if they supported the right of women to obtain an abortion. His message was widely interpreted as being targeted in particular towards Governor Mario Cuomo of New York.

In a city-wide poll taken by WCBS-TV and The New York Times in June 1990 among 1,047 adults, the Cardinal's threat received overwhelming disapproval. Only 16% of New York's residents answered positively when asked, "Cardinal O'Connor has threatened Catholic elected officials with possible excommunication if they support abortion rights. Do you approve or disapprove of this action by Cardinal O'Connor?" Disapproving were 73% of the respondents, and 11% were undecided.

New York's Catholics (20%) were only slightly more likely than Protestants (16%) to say they approved of the Cardinal's actions on the matter. Among the city's considerable Jewish population, only 1% said they approved, while 91% disapproved.

Many Believe Influence of Religion In America is Declining

The influence of religion in America is a factor that has varied widely in surveys taken by Gallup over the years. In the first measurement taken in the 1990s, one person in three (33%) believes the influence of religion is increasing, but nearly half (48%) say its influence is declining. An additional 7% of the populace volunteers the opinion that the amount of influence has remained constant, and 12% hold no opinion on the matter.

Previously, the low point in the proportion of people who thought religion's influence was increasing occurred in the 1960s when an average of only 27% held that view. Just a decade earlier in the 1950s, 69% of the populace believe religion's influence was increasing in America.

Trend—Influence of Religion is Increasing

1990	33%
1980s	41
1970s	34
1960s	27
1950s	69

When the results are viewed demographically, remarkably little variation is noted among various segments of the population. Born-again Christians are the most optimistic about religion's current role in America, with 39% believing it is increasing its influence.

The question is asked as follows:

At the present time do you think religion as a whole is increasing its influence on American life or losing its influence?

The results are based on telephone interviews by The Gallup Poll with a randomly-selected national sample of 1,235 adults, 18 and older, conducted June 15-17, 1990.

Influence of Religion in America

	Increasing	Decreasing	About same	Don't know
NATIONAL	**33%**	**48%**	**7%**	**12%**
Gender				
Male	30	48	10	12
Female	37	48	5	10
Education				
College graduates	33	44	11	12
Attended college	34	49	7	10
High school grads.	34	52	5	9
Non-high school grads.	32	44	8	16
Race				
White	31	50	7	12
Black	36	41	12	11
Age				
18-29	35	52	7	6
30-49	37	48	6	9
50 and older	28	47	10	15
Region				
East	29	53	6	12
Midwest	31	52	7	10
South	36	43	9	12
West	36	44	8	12
Income				
$50,000 & over	29	49	9	13
$30,000-$49,999	34	53	6	7
$20,000-$29,999	34	50	8	8
Under $20,000	37	46	6	11
Preference				
Protestant	33	48	7	12
Catholic	32	52	10	7
Born-Again	39	44	7	10

Teens Would Like to Learn About World's Religions

Three teenagers in 10 (30%) say they would have a great deal of interest in learning about different religions in the world. An additional 32% say they would have some interest, but 37% show little or no interest in any study of comparative religions.

The highest level of interest is found among non-white teens, with almost half (45%) expressing a great deal of interest in studying other people's religions. By comparison, just 25% of white teens express similar interest.

Little difference in those having great interest is noted between Protestant (29%) or Catholic (27%) youth, but among those who attended religious services the previous week, 37% show a great deal of interest in studying other faiths.

Knowledge and age contribute to an interest in learning about other religions of the world. Students who are doing above-average work in school (32%) are somewhat more likely than those whose academic achievement record is average or below average to show a great deal of interest. Only 26% of those who are 13 to 15 would like to learn more about the world's religions, but interest rises to 35% of those who are 16 or older.

Classes on the world's religions probably would draw most students in the South (39%) and West (36%). Fewer students expressing a great deal of interest are found in the East (26%) or Midwest (19%).

Interest was measured through the following question:

How much interest do you have in the following—a great deal of interest, some interest, little interest, or none at all . . . learning about different religions in the world?

The findings are based on telephone interviews by The Gallup Youth Survey with a representative national cross section of 500 teenagers, 13 through 17, conducted between March 24 and April 4, 1990.

Interest in Learning About Different Religions in the World

	Great deal	Some	Little	None
National	30%	32%	23%	14%
Male	23	34	26	16
Female	37	30	20	12
Ages 13 to 15	26	34	25	14
Ages 16 to 17	35	29	21	14
Above-average students	32	33	24	10
Average and below	27	31	23	18
White-collar family	27	33	24	14
Blue-collar family	31	32	24	13
White	25	33	25	17
Non-white	45	30	18	7
East	26	31	24	18
Midwest	19	38	28	14
South	39	29	18	13
West	36	30	24	10
Protestant	29	32	26	12
Catholic	27	31	22	18
Attended church last week	37	33	18	12
Did not attend	23	30	29	17

NOTE: "No opinion" (1%, nationally) omitted.

Many Received Religious Training During Childhood

Most Americans (85%) say they received at least some religious training during their childhood. The latest incident figures from Gallup compare favorably with the level of 83% who reported religious training in a survey taken in 1978, but represent a drop in comparison to Gallup Poll results for 1965 and 1952.

Trend—Religious Training

1990	85%
1978	83
1965	91
1952	94

The affluent and well-educated are the most likely people to report religious training, with reports peaking among college graduates (92%) and people with annual household incomes in excess of $50,000 (92%). Least often receiving religious instruction during their childhoods are those who did not graduate from high school (74%) and people with family incomes of less than $20,000 (80%).

Regionally speaking, residents of the Midwest (90%) are the most likely to have received religious instruction, while westerners are the least likely to have attended Sunday school or to have obtained religious instruction in any other way (74%).

Although women generally are more apt than men to be active in church affairs and to be influenced by religion, their adult religious behavior apparently has little to do with their childhood preparation, as they are only slightly more likely than men to have received religious instruction, by a margin of 87% to 83%.

Catholics (90%) are slightly more likely than Protestants (85%) to have received formal religious instruction during their childhood.

Received Religious Training During Childhood

	Yes	No
NATIONAL	85%	15%
Gender		
Male	83	17
Female	87	13
Education		
College graduates	92	8
Attended college	90	10
High school grads.	85	15
Non-high school grads.	74	26
Race		
White	86	14
Black	83	17
Age		
18-29	84	16
30-49	88	12
50 and older	83	17
Region		
East	86	14
Midwest	90	10
South	84	16
West	81	19
Income		
$50,000 & over	92	8
$30,000-$49,999	85	15
$20,000-$29,999	88	12
Under $20,000	80	20
Preference		
Protestant	85	15
Catholic	90	10
Born-Again	86	14

Belief in an Afterlife is Unchanged

Belief that there is existence after life is fundamental to religious belief, and in the view of many social scientists is a primary driving force in people's quest for religious faith and metaphysical speculation, whether their beliefs are primitive or advanced. Currently, seven Americans in 10 (71%) believe in life after death. One person in 10 (10%) expresses uncertainty about life after death, but 19% assert there is no continued existence.

The current level of belief in a life hereafter is unchanged since 1981 when Gallup last questioned Americans on the subject and also found 71% believing their persona would continue in some form after death. The high mark in belief occurred in 1952 when 77% expressed confidence they would have a life after death.

Trend—Life After Death

1990	71%
1980s	69
1970s	70
1960s	74
1950s	74
1940s	72

Interestingly, belief in a life hereafter peaks in middle age among those who are 30 to 49 years of age, when 74% believe in a continued existence. Among those who are 50 or older, and nearer to the time when the question will no longer be academic, there is a slight diminution in belief in the hereafter, while the proportion who are uncertain about the matter rises to 15%. Among those who are age 30, 69% believe in a life after death, but the number who are skeptics (25%) is the highest according to any of the demographical or behavioral variables by which the survey responses were analyzed.

Most confident in life after death are Born-again Christians (84%). Protestants and Catholics are equal in this respect, with 74% of the members of both denominations expressing belief.

Belief was determined through the following question:

Do you believe in life after death?

The results are based on telephone interviews by The Gallup Poll with a randomly selected national sample of 1,236 adults, 18 and older, conducted June 15-17, 1990.

Belief in Life After Death

	Yes	No	Not sure
NATIONAL	**71%**	**19%**	**10%**
Gender			
Male	67	23	10
Female	75	15	10
Education			
College graduates	70	22	8
Attended college	75	17	8
High school grads.	72	17	11
Non-high school grads.	66	22	12
Race			
White	71	19	10
Black	62	32	6
Age			
18-29	69	25	6
30-49	74	17	9
50 and older	68	17	15
Region			
East	66	25	9
Midwest	78	11	11
South	73	18	9
West	67	23	10
Income			
$50,000 & over	72	20	8
$30,000-$49,999	65	25	10
$20,000-$29,999	76	13	11
Under $20,000	70	19	11
Preference			
Protestant	74	16	10
Catholic	74	18	8
Born-Again	84	9	7

Announcing . . . Gallup/CRA Research Services

The Gallup Organization of Princeton, N.J. and the CRA Research Group of Orlando, Florida have created a joint venture to provide research and consultation services to the religious community. The new group combines Gallup's experience of over 50 years in conducting research on religion with the communications consulting capabilities of the CRA Research Group.

The organization is designed specifically to conduct high quality research services at the local and regional level by working with clergy and laity, as well as with the leadership of religious organizations.

Gallup/CRA is a full-service firm offering survey research, focus groups, and data retrieval facilities for all phases of research from designs through analysis and report. The firm will also specialize in consultation on developing and implementing communication strategies for religious organizations.

For more information contact:

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Laity Votes For Low Salaries For Clergy

When it comes time to set compensation around the community, the clergy ranks at the bottom of the list of a wide range of professions and occupations that were tested. Only one person in four (26%) believes that appropriate annual compensation for the clergy would be $40,000 or more. An additional one in four (26%) sets their compensation in the $30,000 to $39,999 range, but 37% of the populace believes members of the clergy should be content to receive under $30,000 annually. One person in 10 (11%) has no opinion on the matter.

Three people in four or more believe that physicians (79%), lawyers (76%), and engineers (73%) are entitled to annual compensation of at least $40,000. Many believe that pharmacists (61%), nurses (48%), and teachers (42%) should also be in the top-income bracket. People may gripe about their plumbing bills, but they also more often believe that plumbers should receive higher compensation than members of the clergy, with two in three (67%) saying plumbers should be paid $30,000 or more a year.

Opinions on compensation were obtained through the following question:

"As I mention the name of an occupation or profession, would you please tell me the annual salary you feel people in that occupation should be paid in this community?"

The results are from a survey conducted by Gallup for Phi Delta Kappa, based upon personal in-home interviews with 1,594 adults, 18 years of age and older, conducted in the period of April to May 1990.

Opinion Of Appropriate Salaries

	$40,000 & over	$30,000-$39,999	$29,999 or less	Don't know
Physicians	79%	3%	10%	8%
Lawyers	76	6	8	10
Engineers	73	11	6	10
Pharmacists	61	18	14	7
Nurses	48	26	18	8
Teachers	42	28	22	8
Plumbers	37	30	25	8
Clergy	26	26	37	11

Is Religion Becoming 'Important' Again?

After declines during the 1970s and 1980s, the sense of the importance of religion in America may be reviving, according to the first survey taken on the question by Gallup in the 1990s.

Currently, 58% of Americans say religion is "very important," 29% consider it "fairly important" and 13% feel it is not "very important" to them. The sense of importance hit its low point during the 1970s when the average rating of very important was 52%. The average rose slightly to 55% in the 1980s, and may still be climbing. There is still, however, plenty of room for growth before the proportion saying religion is very important matches opinion in the 1960s when 70% considered it very important and in the 1950s when three Americans in four (75%) said it was very important in their lives.

In 1990, the only group matching the sentiment of the 1950s when three in four said religion is very important are 77% of those people who say they have been "born again", and 81% of the blacks who were interviewed on the survey.

Regionally speaking, the South leads the nation in the proportion of its people who consider religion very important in their lives (70%). Over half of the residents of the Midwest (57%) share this sentiment, but just half of those living in the East (51%) or West (49%) say it is very important to them.

Women more often than men say religion is very important, by a margin of 68% to 47%. Others attaching a high sense of importance to religion include non-high school graduates (71%), people who are 50 and older (70%), and those whose annual family incomes are less than $20,000 (66%).

Importance of Religion

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important
NATIONAL	**58%**	**29%**	**13%**
Gender			
Male	47	34	19
Female	68	25	7
Education			
College graduates	48	32	20
Attended college	53	30	17
High school grads.	59	33	8
Non-high school grads.	71	19	10
Race			
White	56	31	13
Black	81	16	3
Age			
18-29	43	42	15
30-49	55	30	15
50 and older	70	21	9
Region			
East	51	36	13
Midwest	58	35	7
South	70	23	7
West	49	24	27
Income			
$50,000 & over	42	38	20
$30,000-$49,999	53	32	15
$20,000-$29,999	56	30	14
Under $20,000	66	25	9
Preference			
Protestant	63	28	9
Catholic	58	33	9
Born Again	77	19	4

Trend

	Consider religion "very important"
1990	58%
1980s	55
1970s	52
1960s	70
1950s	75

Moral Imperatives Receive High Endorsement

Despite all the talk and media reports about relativism and secular humanism and similar phenomena that suggest people may have lost their sense of values and their ability to distinguish between right and wrong, the great majority of Americans still adhere to a belief in moral imperatives. One person in three (33%) holds an absolute view that there are clear guidelines about what is good and what is evil and that these principles apply to everyone. An additional 52% say they mostly agree that this is true. Only one person in 10 mostly disagrees (8%) or completely rejects (3%) the existence of moral imperatives in life.

Blacks (45%) and evangelicals (45%) are those most likely to be in complete agreement that there are clear guidelines guiding our moral behavior. People under 30 (23%) are least likely to adhere to an absolute belief in such guidelines, but 63% of people from this age bracket do state that they "mostly agree" that they exist.

College graduates (16%) and the affluent (15%) are the segments of the population from which people who are prone to justify philosophically "bending the rules" of ethical behavior are most likely to be found.

Those who do say moral absolutes are a central tenet of their faith undoubtedly will be alarmed by the findings that two people in three believe there can be some degree of relativism in deciding what is good and what is evil. Those adhering unswervingly to belief in moral imperatives are unlikely to take any comfort even in the finding that 52% of adults "mostly" agree there are clear guidelines governing ethical decisions.

The question was asked as follows: *"Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with this statement: 'There are clear guidelines about what's good or evil that apply to everyone regardless of their situation. Do you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree?"*

The findings are from a Gallup Poll, conducted by telephone interviews with 1,236 adults, age 18 and older, conducted June 15-17, 1990.

Belief In Moral Imperatives

	Completely agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Completely disagree	No opinion
NATIONAL	**33%**	**52%**	**8%**	**3%**	**4%**
Gender					
Male	32	52	9	4	3
Female	35	52	7	3	3
Education					
College graduates	32	50	11	5	2
Attended college	34	53	6	5	2
High school grads.	33	56	7	2	2
Non-high school grads.	35	46	8	4	7
Race					
White	32	54	8	3	3
Black	45	43	6	3	3
Age					
18-29	23	63	8	6	*
30-49	37	49	9	3	2
50 and older	36	50	7	2	5
Region					
East	33	50	8	5	4
Midwest	32	54	10	2	2
South	35	53	6	2	4
West	33	53	8	4	2
Income					
$50,000 & over	29	55	11	4	1
$30,000-$49,999	28	60	7	4	1
$20,000-$29,999	38	49	8	2	3
Under $20,000	35	50	6	3	6
Preference					
Protestant	35	52	7	2	4
Catholic	32	56	7	3	2
Born-again	45	46	5	1	3

*Less than one-half of 1 percent.

Church Membership Holds Steady

The proportion of Americans who claim church membership has been remarkably constant over the decades. In the first Gallup audit of the 1990s, 69% of adults say they are a member of a church, synagogue or similar religious congregation. This matches the average membership of 68% during the 1980s and 70% in the 1970s. Earlier, from the 1930s through the 1960s, membership was slightly higher, averaging 73% to 74% on Gallup Poll audits.

The highest claims of church membership are found among those who say they are "born again" (82%) and the Catholic faithful (81%). Seven in 10 Protestants in general (71%) say they have formal church affiliation.

The regions with the highest proportions of their population who are church members are the Midwest (76%) and the South (74%). In the East, membership is at the national average of 69%, but church affiliation dips well below that average in the West, where only 54% of the residents of that region claim membership.

The membership rolls swell as the population ages. Least likely to be members are young adults who are ages 18 to 29 (62%). Membership climbs to 67% of those people who are 30 to 49, and the houses of worship attract three in four (75%) of those who are 50 and older as members.

Women are somewhat more likely than men to be church members, by a margin of 72% to 66%.

Trends—Members

1990	69%
1980s	68
1970s	70
1960s	73
1950s	73
1940s	74
1930s	73

Church Membership—1990

	Yes	No
NATIONAL	**69%**	**31%**
Gender		
Male	66	34
Female	72	28
Education		
College graduates	70	30
Attended college	69	31
High school grads.	68	32
Non-high school grads.	69	31
Race		
White	69	31
Black	71	29
Age		
18-29	62	38
30-49	67	33
50 and older	75	25
Region		
East	69	31
Midwest	76	24
South	74	26
West	54	46
Income		
$50,000 & over	66	34
$30,000-$49,999	67	33
$20,000-$29,999	68	32
Under $20,000	68	32
Preference		
Protestant	71	29
Catholic	81	19
Born Again	82	18

Majority Of Americans Touched By A Power Outside Themselves

A majority of Americans (54%) say they have at some time been aware of or in the presence of a power outside themselves. The percentage saying that they have felt such a presence is 10 percentage points higher than in 1985, possibly reflecting a greater willingness to talk about such experiences.

Indeed, it is noteworthy that the highest incidence of this awareness is found among the well educated, a group which generally records the lowest frequency of religious awareness and belief. Awareness of an outside presence is found among two in three of those who graduated from (65%) or attended college (68%). By comparison, only 49% of high school graduates and 37% of non-high school graduates gave similar reports. As the latter groups often include many who usually report high religious belief and practice, it is somewhat puzzling that they would be less inclined to report awareness. It may be possible that the concept of an "outside power or presence" is an abstract expression unfamiliar to some, and so even if they have had such an experience it would not be reported. Accordingly, the true incidence of awareness may be even higher than recorded by the survey.

No significant difference in awareness is found between Protestants and Catholics, but Born-Again Christians (63%) are among those most likely to report they have felt the presence of an outside power. Women are more likely than men to have felt such a presence, by a margin of 58% to 48%.

The question was asked as follows: *"Have you ever been aware of, or influenced by, a presence or a power—whether you call it God or not—which is different from your everyday self?"*

The findings are based upon a Gallup Poll conducted by telephone interviews with a randomly-selected national sample of 1,236 adults, 18 and older, in June 15-17, 1990.

Aware Or Influenced By Outside Power

	Yes	No	Don't know
NATIONAL	**54%**	**42%**	**4%**
Gender			
Male	48	47	5
Female	58	38	4
Education			
College graduates	65	33	2
Attended college	68	28	4
High school grads.	49	47	4
Non-high school grads.	37	56	7
Race			
White	54	41	5
Black	52	47	1
Age			
18-29	53	45	2
30-49	63	34	3
50 and older	44	49	7
Region			
East	46	48	6
Midwest	54	41	5
South	56	40	4
West	58	40	2
Income			
$50,000 & over	61	36	3
$30,000-$49,999	60	37	3
$20,000-$29,999	53	44	3
Under $20,000	47	50	3
Preference			
Protestant	55	41	4
Catholic	53	42	5
Born-again	63	33	4

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Religion in America 1990

Religion In America 1990 highlights trends in religious beliefs and practices, as well as the public's view on the impact of religion on society. Many of these indicators have become basic and standard measurements of the state of organized religion in the U.S.

The report also presents a detailed analysis of church attendance and membership by key population groups and by major faiths and denominations. Because no other organization regularly measures America's churchgoing habits, The Gallup Poll has lent its fact-finding service for this purpose.

Also included are demographic profiles of the major faiths and denominations, as well as trends in religious preference and identification.

A special commentary by George Gallup, Jr. explores the implications of recent survey findings for America's churches, as we move into the final decade of the 20th century.

The cost per copy is only $30.00, plus $2.00 for postage and handling. Make checks payable to Princeton Religion Research Center, P.O. Box 389, Princeton, New Jersey 08542.

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Older Teens Less Likely To Say Grace

Nationally, half of the teens in America (51%) said grace the last time they and their family sat down together for an evening meal. As teens grow older, however, grace is less often said in households where they are present. In homes where teens are ages 13 to 15, the incidence of saying grace before a typical evening meal is 57%. By the time teens turn 16, saying grace is found in only 44% of the households.

Teens who attended church during the seven-day period preceding the time of interview are the most likely to ask the Lord's blessing before supping, with 72% reporting grace was said in their household when they and their family last ate together in the evening. Only 30% of those who did not attend church gave similar reports.

Protestant youths are more likely than Catholics to have said grace, by a margin of 60% to 48%. Non-white teens (59%) are more apt to have heard grace said than are whites (49%) by a similar proportion.

Two teenage households in three in the South (66%) say grace before evening meals. Slightly over half of midwestern households (52%) ask for blessings, but about only four in 10 do so in the East (42%) or West (39%).

The question was asked in the following way:

"Thinking now of just the last time you had your evening meal together, which of the following things did you do at that time . . . said grace or a prayer before the meal?"

The findings are based on a Gallup Youth Survey study consisting of telephone interviews with a representative national cross section of 500 teenagers, 13 through 17, conducted between March 24 and April 4, 1990.

Teens Who Said Grace At Last Evening Meal

	Said Grace
NATIONAL	**51%**
Male	52
Female	51
Ages 13 to 15	57
Ages 16 to 17	44
White	49
Non-white	59
White-collar family	52
Blue-collar family	51
East	42
Midwest	52
South	66
West	39
Protestant	60
Catholic	48
Attended church last week	72
Did not attend	30

Christmas, Thanksgiving Favorite Holidays

Christmas is the overwhelming favorite holiday of Americans, with 72% naming it as first in their affections. Thanksgiving, named by 8%, is second. Easter is named by 2%, so that overall, 82% of adults name one of the holidays with religious significance as their favorite.

Less often cited are purely secular holidays such as the Fourth of July (3%), New Year's (2%), Halloween (2%), Memorial Day (1%), or Labor Day (1%).

The results are from a Gallup Poll survey among a nationwide cross-section of 1,227 adults, 18 and older, interviewed by telephone in the period of October 12 through 15, 1989.

Favorite Holiday

Christmas	72%
Thanksgiving	8
Easter	2
Independence Day	3
New Year's	2
Halloween	2
Memorial Day	1
Labor Day	1
Other	2
None, no opinion	7
	100%

Stewardship Important Aspect of Being Rich

The 1980s often have been characterized as a decade of greed during which the gap between the "have's" and "have-not's" of the United States grew larger. Most people, when asked, consider themselves to be "middle income" but show ambivalent attitudes and opinions about the rich.

Only 7% of the population classify themselves as being in an upper-income bracket, and less than 1% feel they are now rich in a material sense. The majority (59%) say they are middle income, while one person in three feels he is a lower-income person (23%) or poor (10%).

Two people in three (66%) now believe that income distribution in the U.S. should be fairer, compared to just 60% who held similar opinions in 1984. Correspondingly, the proportion of Americans who believe the percentage of their fellow countrymen who live below the poverty line is growing, has increased during the same period from 70% in 1984 to 79% in 1990.

Despite biblical injunctions about the difficulties the rich will experience upon trying to enter heaven, seven people in 10 (71%) see no difference in abilities between the rich and the poor in loving God and one's neighbors.

Only one person in three feels the rich are now doing an excellent (6%) or good job (27%) in giving back to society charitable contributions and donations. If they were to become rich themselves, however, 63% say they would view a very important aspect of their stewardship as the ability to give generously to charitable works and to help people in need.

Seven people in 10 (70%) think there is too much emphasis upon the rich and striving to become rich in America today; but, almost as many (59%), if given the choice, would also like to be rich themselves. The rich may not be envied (82%), but they are respected and admired by a majority of Americans (52%).

The results are based on telephone interviews by The Gallup Poll with a randomly-selected national sample of 1,255 adults, 18 and older, conducted May 17-20, 1990.

First of all, thinking just about your own financial situation, do you consider yourself to be rich, upper income, middle income, lower income, or poor?

	1990
Rich	*
Upper income	7
Middle income	59
Lower income	23
Poor	10
No opinion	1
	100%

Do you feel that the distribution of money and wealth in this country today is fair, or do you feel that the money and wealth in this country should be more evenly distributed among a larger percentage of the people?

	1984	1990
Distribution fair	31%	28%
Should be more evenly distributed	60	66
No opinion	9	6
	100%	100%

Would you say that the percentage of Americans living below the poverty line is increasing from year to year, or decreasing from year to year?

	1984	1990
Increasing	70%	79%
Decreasing	18	15
No opinion	12	6
	100%	100%

Is it more difficult for a rich person than a poor person to love God and one's neighbors, less difficult, or is there no difference?

	1990
More difficult	19%
Less difficult	6
No different	71
No opinion	4
	100%

How good a job do the rich in America do in terms of contributing back to society by charitable contributions, donations and the like?

	1990
Excellent job	6%
Good job	27
Fair job	42
Poor job	19
No opinion	6
	100%

Do you think there is too much, too little or about the right amount of emphasis and attention on the rich and trying to become rich in America today?

	1990
Too much emphasis	70%
Too little emphasis	6
About the right amount of emphasis	18
No opinion	6
	100%

Being rich means that you are able to do things or own things that others can't. How important is each of the following as a reason for wanting to be rich . . . To be able to contribute generously to charities and help people in need?

	1990
Very important	63%
Somewhat important	31
Not very important	5
No opinion	1
	100%

Do you envy rich people or not?

	1990
Yes, envy rich	17%
No, don't envy them	82
No opinion	1
	100%

All in all, if you had your choice, would you want to be rich, or not?

	1990
Yes, would want to be rich	59%
No	38
No opinion	3
	100%

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100 Questions and Answers: Religion in America

by

George Gallup, Jr. and Sarah Jones

A convenient source for key survey facts about religion.

100 Questions and Answers: Religion in America, is a 253-page book that fills the need for a convenient, compact source of vital and up-to-date survey findings on religion.

This book, which represents the distillation of many recent Gallup surveys, deals in depth with each of 100 topics—analysis by key demographic groups, trends, background information, and charts. Sections include religious belief and ethics, religion and politics, religious experience, and spiritual development and commitment.

Based on a wide range of questions put to the U.S. public over the past decade by The Princeton Religion Research Center, the Gallup Poll, and the Gallup Youth Survey, this book takes a hard look at religion in America from the ground up.

The cost is $30.00 per copy, including postage and handling. To order your copy contact the Princeton Religion Research Center, 100 Palmer Square, P.O. Box 389, Princeton, NJ 08542. You may also order by telephone (609/921-8112).

Confidence In Organized Religion Rebounds

Organized religion and the U.S. military have this in common: over the past year both have gained increased confidence from the American public. Organized religion reached its lowest point in 1989 when only a bare majority of citizens (52%) gave positive ratings to the degree of confidence they hold in it. This year, their confidence rebounded somewhat, with 56% of those polled stating that they have a great deal or quite a lot of faith in organized religion. Until 1985 organized religion was always the clear-cut leader among 10 American institutions that have been tested by the Gallup Poll since 1973. In 1986, however, for the first time it placed second to the U.S. military as the institution in which the American public maintains its greatest trust. The military in 1990 is enjoying its highest ratings since the question was first asked, with two people in three (68%) now expressing confidence in it. This represents a five percentage-point increase in positive opinion since 1989 when 63% of the survey respondents expressed similar confidence.

Over the past year public schools (45%) and the press (39%) have also registered modest gains in public approval. Losing the American public's confidence have been the beleaguered banks of the nation which slipped from 49% approval in 1988 to 36% in 1990, the U.S. Supreme Court which dropped from a high rating of 56% in 1988 to just 47% in the current year, and the U.S. Congress which slid from a 35% approval rating in 1988 to only 24% in 1990.

Organized labor, big business, and the television industry have remained relatively unchanged in the degree of confidence they have received from the U.S. public in recent years.

Ratings of institutions were obtained through the following question:

"I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one: a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little.

The results are based on telephone interviews conducted by the Gallup Poll with a randomly-selected national sample of 1,241 adults, ages 18 and older, during the period of August 16-19, 1990.

"Until 1985 organized religion was the clear-cut leader among . . . American institutions"

Trend—Confidence in Organized Religion

(Those who have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in organized religion)

	%	Rank
1990	56	2nd
1989	52	2nd
1988	59	1st
1987	61	1st-tied
1986	57	2nd
1985	66	1st
1984	64	1st
1983	62	1st
1981	64	1st
1979	65	1st
1977	64	1st
1975	68	1st
1973	66	1st

Confidence in American Institutions—1990

	A great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little	None (vol.)	No opinion
Military	37%	31%	22%	7%	1%	2%
Church/organized religion	33	23	26	14	2	2
Public schools	21	24	34	18	1	2
U.S. Supreme Court	19	28	31	16	2	4
Newspapers	15	24	42	16	2	1
Banks	13	23	40	21	2	1
Television	12	13	41	30	3	1
Organized labor	11	16	40	25	3	5
Congress	9	15	43	28	2	3
Big business	9	16	40	28	3	4

The Bible: The Best-Read Book in America

NEW YORK—On the fiftieth anniversary of National Bible Week, celebrated November 18-25, The Princeton Religion Research Center presented to the Interfaith Luncheon hosted by the Laymen's National Bible Association, a comprehensive study of *The Role of the Bible in American Society*. Here are the highlights of the study.

The Bible undoubtedly is the most widely read book in America. Currently, 17% of adults report they read the Bible daily. An additional one person in four (23%) reads it weekly, but this latter group most probably contains some people who read it as part of weekly group religious service recitations, rather than as an individual exercise.

The Bible is read at least monthly by 13% of adults, but 25% say they read it less often than that, and 20% report they have never read it. Failure to read the Bible at all probably is more a matter of lack of faith or interest than illiteracy, as non-readers are found in about equal proportions among people of all levels of academic attainment.

A majority of Protestants are frequent Bible readers, with 24% reporting daily readership and 28% weekly readership. Only about half as many Catholics read it on a daily (7%) or weekly (16%) basis.

Among adult Bible readers, almost half say they have read all (26%) or most (18%) of the Old Testament, while a majority have read all (35%) or most (20%) of the New Testament. One person in four (24%) has read about half of the Old Testament, while 20% say they have read less than half and 11% have seen little or none of it. Similarly, 19% of adult Bible readers have read about half of the New Testament, 13% less than half, and 12% little or none of it.

Despite the impressive statistics concerning Bible reading, it is apparent that ignorance of its contents is widespread. In 1990, only half of the adults interviewed nationwide could name any one of the four Gospels of the New Testament. Just 37% could name all four, compared to 42% who were able to cite the four titles correctly in 1982.

Use of the Bible in the schools

Few people are aware of any use of the Bible in the public schools of their community. One in five believes that courses are offered in studying the major religions of the world (21%), and that school facilities are available for use by student religious groups or organizations (21%); but very few report any use of the Bible in secular classes (9%) or in elective courses in Bible studies (8%). The reported figures of incidence may, however, be somewhat understated, because young adults who of course most recently attended the schools, tend to give higher estimates of these Bible activities in the local schools.

Unlike school prayer which the U.S. Supreme Court views as a violation of the separation of church and state, these activities generally are considered permissible under First Amendment guidelines. A Gallup Poll conducted in 1986 found that three people in four or better favored having the public schools offer these studies about religion and the Bible.

The most recent results are based on telephone interviews with a randomly-selected national sample of 1,021 adults, 18 and older, conducted in November 1990.

A limited number of copies of the full 28-page report on *The Role of Bible in American Society* by George Gallup, Jr. and Robert Bezilla, are available from The Princeton Religion Research Center for $9.95, including postage and handling. The report presents a compilation of key Gallup figures and trends on Bible reading and biblical attitudes for adults and teen-agers over the years. Copies may be ordered by telephone (609) 921-8112, or by mailing your request to The Princeton Religion Research Center, P.O. Box 389, Princeton, NJ 08542.

How often do you read the Bible?

Daily or more often	17%
Weekly or more often	23
Monthly or more often	13
Less than monthly	25
Rarely or never	20
No answer	2
	100%

Will you tell me the names of the first four books of the New Testament of the Bible; that is, the Four Gospels?

Matthew	44%
Mark	40
Luke	41
John	45
Can name at least one	50
Can name all four	37

Do you happen to know whether or not the public schools of your community do the following?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Teach about the major religions of the world	21%	39%	40%
Make facilities available after school hours for use by student religious groups or organizations	21	40	39
Use the Bible in literature, history and social study classes	9	52	39
Offer elective courses in Bible studies	8	60	32

Children Bring Love and Joy

Most adults want children, and those who have had them almost always say they would do it again if they had the choice, even though 81% of today's parents believe it is more difficult raising children today than it was in their parents' time. Only about 4% of the American public could be said to be anti-children: they do not have any, do not want any, and are glad they have not had any.

When asked to state in their own words why they have had children, here are the leading responses given by parents:

- The love and affection children bring (12%)
- Having the pleasure of watching them grow (11%)
- The joy, happiness and fun they bring (10%)
- The sense of family they create (7%)
- The fulfillment and satisfaction they bring (6%).

On the down[illegible], parents worry most about:

- The cost of raising children
- Concerns about drugs (13%)
- Worries about the world and society they will live in (5%)
- Teaching children the difference of right from wrong (3%)
- Peer pressure they will face (3%)
- Problems of adolescence and the teen-age years (3%).

Parents appear to be often torn between the ideal and the realities of raising children. Nearly two in three (63%) would consider it ideal for the father to have a job that would enable the mother to stay at home and take care of the children when they are at home. One in three (33%) feels it is best to have a family situation in which both parents have jobs and both take care of the children when they are at home (33%). Only 1% endorse the idea that the mother should be the family's breadwinner and that the father should stay at home and care for the children.

Of course the reality in today's economy is that many families do have two wage earners, making it necessary for both the mother and father to be away from home during the child-raising years. In such households, about two in three (64%) believe that all things considered, their children are just as well off even though the wife works. Dissenting are 34% who feel the children would be better off if the mother were at home and didn't work.

Beyond economic issues, there is still a division of opinion on whether or not the wife should stay home. In two-income households, 50% say that the wife should not work if money were not an issue, but 44% would still like to see the wife continue working.

When viewing the issue from the child's perspective, however, about three in four of the working couples (73%) believe that children would be better off with the mother staying at home. Disagreeing are 24% who say children are just as well off if the mother works. Undecided are 3% of the parents from two-income households.

The findings are from telephone interviews by the Gallup Poll with a randomly-selected national sample of 1,239 adults, ages 18 and older, conducted during April 19-22, 1990.

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Greatest Christmas Joy Comes to Those Who Attach Most Religious Significance to the Holiday

The religious and secular celebration of Christmas may often be in conflict, but the greatest joy of Christmas would seem to be achieved by those who take the day's religious significance most seriously, and share their fortune and joy with others who are lonely or in need.

Christmas is celebrated by 90% of adults, Hanukkah by 1%, and 4% say they celebrate both religious holidays. The remaining 5% of the population celebrates neither.

The trappings of Christmas are apparent in most homes: 85% have a Christmas tree, 78% exchanged Christmas cards with friends and relatives, gifts are opened by 71% on Christmas day, 68% attend Christmas parties, and 48% (mostly women) bake Christmas cookies. The sound of Christmas music enters 87% of America's homes, but only 54% of the people usually sing Christmas carols. The average Christmas celebrant will spend nearly $500 on gifts and an additional $150 on other expenses for the holiday.

Christmas is celebrated in a strongly religious way by 38% of adults, but 37% say they are just somewhat strong in their religious celebration of the day, and 19% are not at all religious in their observance of Christmas. One person in 20 (5%) does not celebrate Christmas in any fashion. Those who invest the greatest religious meaning to Christmas are also the most likely to say they experience a great deal of joy on Christmas day (81%).

Christmas worship services are observed on the eve by 36%, and on the day itself by 25%. This includes 8% who say they attend on both Christmas eve and Christmas day. Catholics (82%) are far more likely than Protestants (53%) to attend Christmas worship services.

Three persons in four (77%) are moved by the spirit of the season to give gifts or to provide assistance to the poor. Beyond those who are poor in a material sense, are many who may not find much joy during the season. One person in three (32%) sometimes feels sad or depressed at Christmas time. Hit hardest are those who have lost a spouse through death, divorce, or separation. Children appear to provide relief from such depression for only a few single parents. Although single parents might draw support from the extended family of the congregation, this does not often appear to be the case, as they are least likely to attend worship services at Christmas.

Preparation for Christmas creates a great deal of stress for 15% of the adult population, and 4% say they do not look forward to the rituals of the season.

Although Christmas usually is a time when people wish to be together, especially with their loved ones, this is not always possible. Last year, 13% were away from home at Christmas, and while many were visiting with relatives or friends, 10% say they were unable to spend the holiday with someone who mattered to them. In the extreme, 3% of the population spent Christmas alone. For 1%, Christmas dinner was not by the family hearth, but in a restaurant.

Gallup Polls in recent years have found that 70% of the adult American population believes in the divinity of Jesus Christ. On a Gallup Poll taken last October, however, 90% named the holiday that bears his name as their favorite. While the secular aspects of Christmas may bring a sense of happiness to many, only 38% of the adults interviewed say the day has a strongly religious meaning for them.

The results are based on telephone interviews with a randomly selected national sample of 1,227 adults, 18 or older, conducted October 12 through 15, 1989. For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The illuminated capital letters in this month's issue were created in America in the twentieth century. The style is entitled "Tory."

Narrowing the Gap Between Belief and Practice

George Gallup, Jr.

Editor's note: Recently Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry turned the tables on George Gallup, Jr. and interviewed him on his views on religion in our society. The following remarks by him are taken from that interview.

One senses a growing search in our society for meaning in life, coupled with a need for deeper relationships with others. This, and the fact that people's basic beliefs appear to be intact, gives great hope and opportunity to the Church.

There is no reason for the Church not to grow. People are searching. They just need to be rooted better. We are trying to make Christians without the Bible. The reason that people so often seem susceptible to any movement that comes along is because they are not biblically rooted.

There are three steps for overcoming this problem and narrowing the gap between belief and practice.

1. **Deepen prayer life.** Clergy and religious leaders too often assume that people pray more than they do and read the Bible more than they do. They assume that these are in place, but they are not, and people need encouragement to pray and study the Bible.

2. **Teach people to share their faith.** There is a great need for clear and compelling presentations of the Gospel. I suspect that a lot of people have never really felt the power of the Gospel, because it has never been presented to them in a clear and compelling manner.

3. **Listen increasingly to the laity.** Our surveys have shown that the laity want a greater role in the Church. They could, for example, take over many of the Church's administrative functions to free the clergy for spiritual direction. What the laity really want from the clergy are spiritual leaders, not bureaucrats.

The first two actions could be done most effectively through small groups. I am enthusiastic about small groups because our surveys have shown their importance, but also because I have seen the miracle of healed relationships. Prayer is the key and the environment should be unthreatening.

There is a place in small groups for intensive study of the Bible, because in them you can really *pray* the Bible to find out what it says to you and how it can change your daily life. Because people can become vulnerable to each other when working together in a small group, they are wonderful places to learn how to share one's faith, learn, and worship as a community.

Small groups potentially are a powerful tool to rebuild and renew a congregation. The quickest way for a parish to grow, and I do not mean just in the numerical sense, but spiritually, is to get people to invite others to participate in its life. By inviting others you are telling people that the Church is extremely important in your life and that it ought to be an important part of their lives as well. Small groups encourage sharing spiritual experience.

In a society where too often the impact of the Gospel is lessening and the reading of the Scripture is sliding, there is a need for both rigor and innovation in devotion to Scripture and Gospel. The Church, its schools, and its leaders need to help its members achieve inner renewal and corporate renewal.

■ **FACTS ON RELIGION**

Christmas

Consider Christmas favorite holiday	90%
Have a Christmas tree at home	85
Usually have an artificial tree	34
Decorate it on Christmas eve	4
Send Christmas cards	78
Give gifts or assist the poor during Christmas season	77
Enjoy Christmas day a great deal	71
Enjoy Christmas eve a great deal	66
Open presents on Christmas day	71
Open them Christmas eve	45
Believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ	70
Attend Christmas parties	68
Sing Christmas carols	54
Bake Christmas cookies	48
Make some Christmas gifts	46
Consider Christmas strongly religious holiday	38
Attend church Christmas eve	36
Attend Christmas day	25
Sometimes feel depressed at Christmas	32
Enjoy Christmas shopping a great deal	28
Do most shopping at last minute	16
Away from home at Christmas last year	13
Unable to spend Christmas with loved ones	10
Spent Christmas alone	3
Ate Christmas dinner at a restaurant	1

Churches Rated Best Able to Deal with Local Community Problems

Survey after survey has demonstrated that those who are active in their church are the most likely candidates to perform volunteer efforts in their community, and so it should come as no surprise to find that churches, synagogues, and volunteer groups inspire the most confidence among people to solve the problems facing the local community. A near-majority of citizens also consider the local schools a positive force. The local media and business community more often inspire confidence than does city hall. State and federal government, national business leaders, and political parties generally are viewed as institutions that are too remote to be able to deal effectively with local community conditions.

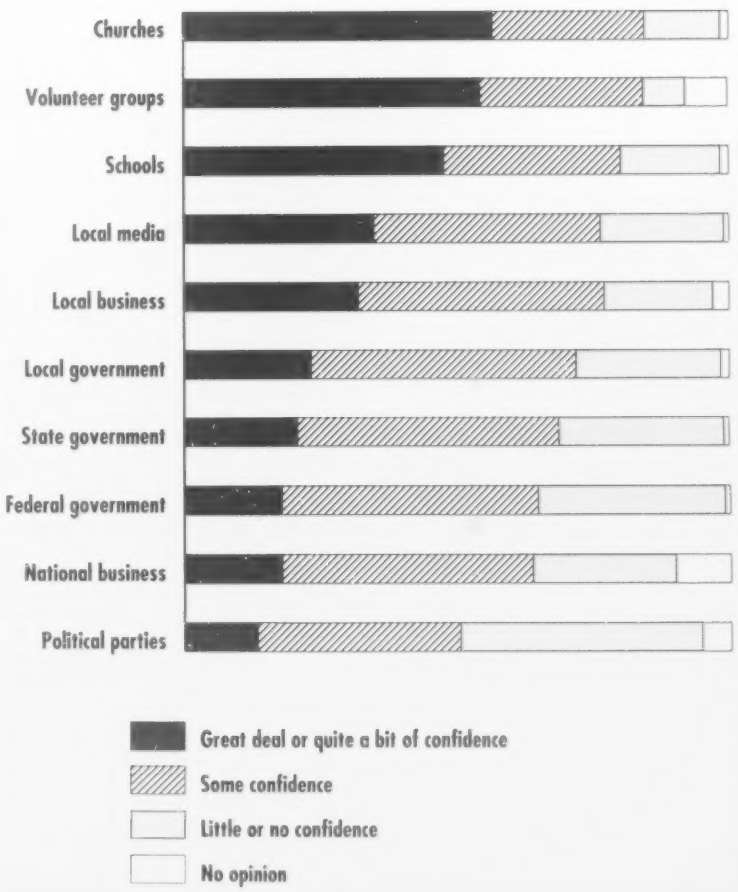
Nearly six people in 10 (57%) say they have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in churches, synagogues and other religious institutions to deal with local community problems. Nearly as many expressed confidence in volunteer groups such as the YMCA (54%), and in the local public school system (47%). All other groups tested on the survey inspired high confidence from only one person in three or fewer.

These opinions of the ability of institutions to deal with local problems are usually voiced uniformly across different segments of American society, except that women are more inclined, and young adults are less inclined, to place their trust in religious institutions. A much higher proportion of women than men say they have confidence in religious institutions, by a margin of 65% to 48%.

A majority of young people, ages 18 to 29, say they have a "great deal" (22%) or "quite a lot of confidence" (35%) in the ability of volunteer groups to deal with the issues facing their community. An additional 32% of the young people interviewed say they have at least "some" confidence in voluntary agencies. Very few offer the opinion that they have "hardly any" (4%) or no confidence (2%) in volunteer efforts as a force in solving local problems.

Similar marks are given to churches, synagogues and other religious institutions, with a majority of young people (52%) saying they have high confidence in them, 30% having some confidence, and only 14% expressing little or no faith in their ability to deal with local problems. Adults who are 30 years or older generally have greater confidence in the religious institutions than those who are younger, with 60% giving them high marks. Interestingly, young people show higher confidence than their elders in all the other institutions tested on the survey. This could suggest that the initial impulse of peo-

Confidence in Ability of Institutions to Solve Local Community Problems



ple when they are young is to seek solutions from secular institutions, but later in life they can be expected to turn more to the church to channel their voluntary instincts to serve the community.

Currently, over one person in five (22%) is involved in volunteer work with local and community problems, and an 7% say they definitely would like to be involved.

Church and religious organizations head the list of volunteer organizations where volunteers say they devote the most time, with 24% naming this channel for their energies. Next in frequency of mention are youth-oriented activities such as youth groups (11%) or school organizations such as the PTA (9%).

Local economic pressures, drugs, and crime head the list of local community problems named as most important.

Most Important Local Problems

Economy	23%
Drugs	16
Crime, gangs	10
Environment	8
Education	7
Government, politics	4
Transportation, traffic	3
The homeless	2
Growth, development	2
Other	13
None, don't know	12
	100%

Here is how the questions were asked:

Thinking about the problems facing your city or local community, how much confidence do you have in the ability of each of the following institutions to deal with those problems? Do you have a great deal of confidence, quite a lot, some, hardly any, or no confidence?

Specifically, what do you think is the most important problem facing your city or local community today?

Do you, yourself, happen to be involved at the present time in any volunteer work with local and community problems? Which one do you give the most time to? Would you like to be involved—definitely, perhaps, or not?

The findings are based upon a nationwide sample of 1,025 adults, interviewed by telephone during the period of November 6–9, 1990. The study was conducted by The George H. Gallup International Institute for The National Civic League.

Dubious Distinction for The Bible

NEW YORK—An informal survey on library thefts conducted for *The New York Times Book Review* (November 18, 1990) found that "the Bible is clearly *the* most stolen book, an all-time favorite that people can't resist lifting. Bookstores and libraries report that thieves devise clever stratagems for acquiring Bibles."

The major source of purloined Bibles, however, may be hotels and motels where an industry spokesman said they "are considered housekeeping items like soap and towels." Gideon Society executive director Frank Tate is quoted as saying that the society does not distinguish between those that are stolen and those that are defaced or worn out, but that 29 million copies in 147 countries were replaced last year.

Advertisement

Start 1991 With These Valuable Studies

The Role of the Bible in American Society by George Gallup, Jr. and Robert Bezilla provides a comprehensive overview of attitudes towards the Bible and trends on Bible reading and knowledge of the Scriptures. Cost per copy is $9.95.

Religion in America 1990—Annual report on the key measures on religious attitudes, beliefs and practices, and predictions for the 1990s. Cost per copy is $30. A limited number of back issues are available for $10 each.

The Unchurched American ... 10 Years Later—An important update on the factors that cause people to leave the church, and those that cause them to return. Cost per copy is $29.

100 Questions and Answers: Religion in America by George Gallup, Jr. and Sarah Jones. A single-volume compendium of the 100 most important questions we have surveyed in the area of religion. A handy reference tool in book size format that categorizes and analyzes key survey data. Price per copy is $30.

Faith Development and Your Ministry—A study of the stages of spiritual growth in one's life, and the impact of life crises on faith development. Cost per copy is $25. Only a few copies of this popular study remain; we expect it to be sold out by early 1991.

Emerging Trends—Commentary on surveys on religious beliefs and practices; 10 issues a year; annual subscription is $35 domestic, $45 foreign. Renew your subscription now before the 1991 postal rate hike!

All prices include postage and handling. If you would like to place an order or to receive more information about these publications, contact the Princeton Religion Research Center, 100 Palmer Square, Suite 213D, Princeton, NJ 08542. Telephone (609) 921-8112.

Many Adults Engaged in Religious Studies

About one American adult in five in 1990 reports involvement in Bible study (21%), prayer or meditation groups (21%), and religious education classes (20%).

The likelihood of participation in such activities increases as the population grows older. Religious education, for example, usually is thought of by many as an activity of the young, but among adults at least, those under 30 years of age (12%) are about half as likely as people in their middle ages (25%), or over 50 (20%) to be involved in religious study. Bible study increases from 16% among those who are under 30 to 21% among the middle-aged and to 25% among older Americans. A similar pattern is noted for prayer and meditation group participation, which rises from 17% among the young to 23% among those who are in the oldest age bracket.

Black adults show higher rates of participation in religious activities than whites. Only 20% of the whites interviewed participated in each of the three activities tested, compared to Bible study by 36% of the black respondents, prayer or meditation group participation by 29%, and attendance of religious education classes by 24%.

The South (30%) and Midwest (22%) are the regions where Bible study most likely is to be reported. It is decidedly less prevalent in the West (15%) or East (13%). The West (24%), however, matches the South (25%) in participation in prayer or meditation groups (although in certain parts of California the term "meditation" may take on different meanings). Lesser participation in prayer or meditation is found in the Midwest (19%) and East (15%). Religious education classes find their best attendance in the South (24%) and Midwest (19%). Fewer people in West (19%) and in the East (15%) currently are receiving religious instructions.

The findings are taken from the question, *Which, if any, of these are you involved in or do you practice? Bible study? Prayer or meditation groups? Religious education classes?*

The survey was taken by Gallup among a nationwide sample of 1,021 adults, age 18 and older, during September 1990.

Religious Activities

	Bible study	Prayer/ meditation groups	Religious education classes
National	21%	21%	20%
Gender			
Male	19	20	18
Female	22	21	22
Age			
8–29	16	17	12
30–49	21	20	25
50 & over	25	23	20
Region			
East	13	15	15
Midwest	22	19	22
South	30	25	24
West	15	24	19
Race			
White	20	20	20
Black	36	29	24
Other	24	22	15
Education			
College grads.	20	18	25
College inc.	24	29	29
High school grads.	19	18	17
Not H.S. grads.	22	24	27
Income			
$50,000 & over	16	18	23
$30,000–$49,999	25	22	24
$20,000–$29,999	22	26	19
Under $20,000	23	21	16

Christmas Suggestions

- There can be many distractions at Christmas time, but putting Christ back into Christmas is a matter of individual conscience. Help others to understand the increased joy you may experience on his day.
- Be sensitive to the needs of interfaith couples who may struggle most at this time of year to reconcile their differences.
- The church should recognize that this can be a highly stressful period for some people: Don't add to the demands that are placed upon them.
- The sight of couples worshipping or celebrating together will be painful for some who have lost their partners. Recognize the special grieving needs of people at Christmas time.
- Single parent and child alike may find church a painful experience if activities seem geared mainly to families where both parents are present.
- Reach out to the lonely traveler who through circumstance may be away from home this day.
- This can be the happiest day for children, but also teach them by word and example the great joy that you achieve by understanding its significance, and by sharing your love and wealth with others on Christmas.
- Provide alternatives to the synthetic trappings of the secular world by providing opportunities for people to sing carols, make gifts, help the needy, comfort those poor in spirit.

EMERGING TRENDS is published monthly except July and August by the PRINCETON RELIGION RESEARCH CENTER. The Center, founded in 1977, is an inter-faith non-denominational research organization with headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. The PRRC specializes in creative actionable research, utilizing the world wide attitudinal and behavioral facilities of Gallup International. The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the United States and abroad and to explore ways this information can enable religious leaders to promote spiritual growth. A one-year subscription can be obtained for $35.00. Inquire: **Publications Department, P.O. Box 389, 100 Palmer Square, Princeton, New Jersey 08542 (Telephone 609/924-9600). PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGE.**

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PRRC emerging trends

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Religious Research in the 1990s — Part I

Reported by Robert Wuthnow

Religion in America remains vital to our individual and collective well-being. But our religious institutions and our spiritual convictions are being tested as never before. New challenges arise with increasing rapidity as a result of the social changes in our society and the world.

As we enter the final years of the twentieth century, what are the issues that religious leaders need to consider? What are the gaps in our knowledge of American religion? How can researchers provide information on these crucial topics that will be of practical value?

To address these questions over 20 religious leaders and scholars gathered in Princeton in June 1990 for a symposium sponsored by the George H. Gallup International Institute with funding from the Lilly Endowment. A variety of denominations and faiths were represented by individuals who could draw upon their wide experience as clergy, researchers, educators, foundation executives and administrators. There was no preconceived agenda, only the admonition to identify significant issues in American religion toward which research might usefully be directed. Here is a summary of the most important recommendations in outline form.

A. The Meaning of the Church

1. What do people expect of the church?

- What do people think of the church?
- Why do people belong?
- What do they want the church to do for them?
- What are they willing to do for it?
- Is it meeting their needs?
- Should it be doing things differently?

These questions are timely because the shape of the church is undergoing important change. Denominationalism is not as significant as it used to be. Denominational leaders are struggling to redefine their identity. New religious organizations have sprung up. Television ministries have reshaped the public perception of religion. The authority of clergy appears to be in crisis.

We are guessing that many people feel their churches are in decline. Have they lowered their expectations? Have they turned increasingly to secular institutions for their cues? Have they become cynical? Have they decided to work less hard—or—harder for the church?

It would be valuable to focus some attention on the positive aspects of the church, rather than deal continuously with church decline. Where are the pockets of vitality? What hopes do people have for their churches? In what ways have they especially been blessed and ministered to? Surely, research could give encouragement to the beleaguered clergy and laity who are most committed to the church.

We should know more about how church people define success and failure. In some quarters, particularly those that are growing, numeric success seems to be the dominant criterion. But perhaps it is a sign of success if an institution can be allowed to die, because failure may mean selling out to secular standards, even if numeric increase is the result.

What is the relationship between our expectations of the church and our expectations of ourselves? When people expect less of the church, do they also expect less of themselves? And vice versa? Or has religion ceased to be a vital element when we define our roles in life?

2. What can be done to improve "faith literacy"?

We know that biblical knowledge is often embarassingly weak in our society. In the past, biblical knowledge has risen with higher levels of education, but among young people today, the better educated are often as biblically illiterate as the less well educated.

continued on page 2

Religious Research

continued from page 1

According to publishing reports, religious books are selling in record numbers, but what is the public learning from these books? Self help? Good feelings? Comfort? Or are people being challenged ethically, morally and theologically by contemporary religious writers?

In the past, people looked to their clergy, to sermons, to Sunday School classes and to bible studies for religious knowledge. All these media still exist, but increasingly it is likely that images of Moses are shaped by the movies, images of church by televangelism, and of morality by the newspapers and public affairs. No longer do we partake of denominational tradition or systematic theology or even a comprehensive approach to the Bible.

Perhaps there are many people in our society who understand forgiveness and redemption and transcendence intuitively, but without conceptual knowledge, can their faith remain strong? Can they transmit it to their children?

3. How are women changing the church?

While much attention has been given to the question of women's ordination and some research has been directed towards the implications for the church of women's changing role in the labor force and the family, other important issues remain unexamined.

- What is the nature of the so-called "shadow leadership" of women in the Roman Catholic church?
- How are women clergy and theologians affecting the way in which religion is done?
- What is the relation between the feminization of American religion and its apparent turn toward the therapeutic?
- As we rethink gender issues, what do we discover about the relation between nurturance and religious leadership?

4. What are the major future challenges facing the church?

What different perspectives do clergy, laity, nonmembers and religious elites have upon the future of the church? What do they think the most important religious issues will be? What changes do they envision in religious institutions? What social conditions are going to present new needs to the church? How can these needs be met? In short, what will the church look like in the 21st century?

B. The Quest for Community

1. Support Groups

Anecdotal evidence suggests that interest in prayer fellowships, Bible study groups, and twelve-step groups is on the rise. Small groups have probably been a major source of religious vitality throughout our nation's history, but we know little about this important phenomenon.

We need descriptive data? how many people are involved? In what kinds of groups? Why? What do they get out of it? What sorts of caring and sharing happens in these groups?

Evaluative data also are needed? Which become closed and stale? Which remain open and dynamic? Do they impose group authority on the individual? Do they enhance moral decision-making? Do participants feel better about themselves? Are they more concerned with selves or others? Do they reinforce denominational particularism or break it down? Are they revitalizing the church or competing with it?

2. How does community facilitate spiritual formation?

Individuality has dominated religious education. Each parishioner sits quietly in the pew and listens to the sermon, goes home and studies God's Word in private. What this model lacks is the give-and-take that makes learning dynamic, practical and consequential. In community, the individual has a crucible for trying out new behavior and seeing it modeled in others.

Clergy have been mindful that collective decisions through Bible study groups, class meetings and retreats can model good behavior for the individual as well. Research on spiritual formation should include this community dimension. Questions should be asked about the contexts in which learning takes place, the role of supportive others, and the dynamic interaction between conceptual knowledge and practical living.

3. What should churches be doing in urban communities?

Recent studies have focussed comfortably on the comfortable middle-class suburban milieu—what one symposium member called the new WASPs: White Arrogant Suburban Protestants. The gulf between this group and many who live in our nation's large cities is immense. The problems of the disadvantaged will be addressed later, but here are some additional concerns:

- In culturally diverse communities how can churches and religious leaders create innovative alliances to share information and other resources without destroying their own distinctive traditions?
- When a city becomes a jungle, can churches function as alternative "countercultures"?
- When parks are taken over by drug pushers and streets by antiseptic shopping malls, can church facilities be used as needed public meeting places?
- What can churches and business leaders do together in cities to make life more liveable? Should they work together through voluntary efforts or through the political system?

Robert Wuthnow is Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, and a Trustee of the George H. Gallup International Institute.

More People Now Believe in Heaven and Hell

Belief in both heaven and hell have reached new peaks among the American public. In 1990, over three people in four (78%) said they believed there is a heaven where people who have led good lives are eternally rewarded. According to six persons in 10 (60%) there also is a hell where those who have led bad lives and die without being sorry are eternally damned. Previous records in these beliefs occurred in 1952 when 72% said there is a heaven, and 58% that there is a hell.

Most likely to believe in heaven are women, blacks, adults under age 30, evangelicals, and church members. These also are the same people who tend to believe in eternal damnation, with the exception that men and women are about equal in this respect.

Three in four of those who believe in heaven expect to go there, including 29% who say their chances of doing so are excellent and 49% who feel they are good. Among the remaining believers 17% say their expectations are just fair, and 3% feel their chances are poor, and 2% are undecided. Most evangelicals (91%) rate their likelihood of going to heaven as excellent or good.

Very few believers in hell say there is either an excellent (2%) or good chance (2%) they will go there. There is a fair chance in the opinion of 15% of the believers, but 77% maintain the likelihood of eternal damnation is poor. Undecided on the matter are 2% of the believers. Those who have no religion (9%) and who do not belong to the church (7%) are most concerned about going to hell.

The most recent findings are based on 1,108 interviews conducted by Gallup in November 1990.

The Lord and Satan vying for the soul of man, who is navigating the ocean of vices and sin. From *Le grant Kalendrier et compost des Bergiers*, printed by Nicolas Le Rouge, Troyes, 1496.

Trends in Belief

	Heaven	Hell
1990	78%	60%
1981	71	53
1965	68	54
1952	72	58

Believers in 1990

	Heaven	Hell
Total	78%	60%
Men	74	59
Women	81	61
Ages 18–29	84	71
30–49	78	61
50 & older	74	54
Protestant	84	66
Catholic	81	57
Evangelical	91	80
No religion	46	36
Church member	87	67
Non-member	62	48

Excellent or Good Chance of Going to ...

	Heaven	Hell
Total	78%	4%
Men	73	5
Women	81	3
Ages 18–29	78	3
30–49	80	3
50 & older	76	5
Protestant	80	4
Catholic	76	5
Evangelical	88	3
No religion	61	9
Church member	83	3
Non-member	65	7

THE ROLE OF THE BIBLE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

This valuable resource provides a compilation of key Gallup findings and trends on Bible reading and attitudes towards the Bible for both adults and teen-agers over the years.

The Role of the Bible in American Society by George Gallup, Jr. and Robert Bezilla, was developed to help celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of National Bible Week. It presents measurements and trends on the following important facts and issues:

— What are people's basic beliefs about the Bible? Do they think it should be interpreted as the literal Word of God, as the inspired Word, or as the ancient writings of man only?

— How often do adults and teen-agers read the Bible? Are they reading it more often or less often than in past decades?

— How much of the Old Testament and New Testament have young and older readers actually studied?

— Who studies the Bible? Do children want Bible studies? Are we in danger of becoming a nation of Biblical illiterates?

— Does the public endorse Constitutionally approved use of the Bible in the public schools? How is it now being used in local community schools throughout the country?

Profiles for the findings for all of these questions are provided and placed within the historical context of 50 years' research on biblical reading behavior and attitudes. This comprehensive view provides valuable information not only about what progress has been made in Bible reading, but where further work is needed.

The report is available for $9.95, including postage and handling. Copies may be ordered by telephone (609) 921-8112 or by mailing your request and payment to The Princeton Religion Research Center, P.O. Box 389, Princeton, NJ 08542.

Religion Triumphs Over Atheism in Eastern Europe

Religious belief in Eastern Europe has persisted at high levels despite nearly a half century of suppression. Resisting aggressive official policies and indoctrination in atheism, the level of those professing not to believe in God has remained small. For most measures there is little apparent difference in religious attitudes and behavior between Eastern and Western Europeans.

These findings emerged from Gallup surveys conducted in Czechoslovakia and Hungary in late 1989 and in Lithuania in 1990. Gordon Heald, managing director of the Gallup Poll in Great Britain, provided the survey results at a recent seminar sponsored by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University.

The surveys show that from four to five persons in 10 in each of the countries and groups surveyed describe themselves as "religious persons." In Lithuania, 45% of ethnic Lithuanians describe themselves this way, and 50% non-ethnic Lithuanians consider themselves to be religious persons. Comparable self-descriptions were given by 56% of the Hungarians, and by 49% of the Czechoslovakians interviewed on the surveys. There is a considerable religious gap between Czechs and Slovaks, with 69% of Slovaks saying they are religious persons, compared to 38% of the Czechs. The Eastern Europeans are in the middle of the religious spectrum in comparison to the West, where between 62% of Western Europeans and 46% of Scandinavians consider themselves to be religious persons. By comparison, 81% of Americans describe themselves as religious persons.

Despite the aggressive espousal of atheism under communist rule, there is actually a lower percentage of "convinced atheists" in Lithuania than in many Western European countries. Just 2 percent of ethnic Lithuanians and 4 percent of other Lithuanians say they are convinced atheists. The average for Western Europe is 5 percent, ranging from 1 percent in Ireland, 3 percent in West Germany and Scandinavia, 4 percent each in Great Britain, Italy and Spain to a high of 10 percent in France. In the United States, 5% of Americans say they do not believe in God.

Weekly church attendance for the Eastern Europeans appears to be remarkably high when the comparative scarcity of places of worship and clergy are considered, not to mention frequent official discouragement of attendance in the past. Attending at least once a week now are 17% of Czechoslovaks, 15% of ethnic Lithuanians, 12% of other Lithuanians, and 13% of Hungarians.

In the Hungarian study, the people of that country average 4.8 in rating the importance of God in their lives, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means one does not consider God at all important and 10 means God is believed to be of paramount importance. This is a lower rating than found in most Western European countries and the United States, but still higher than the average ratings in Denmark, France and Sweden.

A high proportion of the people of Czechoslovakia and Hungary have been baptized. Two in three Czechoslovaks (66%) were baptized as Catholics, 10% in Protestant denominations, 1% Orthodox, and 1% in another faith. Only 19% were not baptized, and 3% are unaware if they had been baptized. Seven in 10 Hungarians (71%) were baptized as Catholics, 22% Reformed Church, and 4% Lutheran. Only 1% said they were never baptized, and 2% did not know if they had been.

The findings for each question are based on probability samples of at least 1,000 interviews conducted in each country in 1989 and 1990.

Consider Selves Religious Persons

Italy	83%
United States	81
Ireland	64
Spain	63
Great Britain	58
West Germany	58
Hungary	56
France	51
Other Lithuanians	50
Ethnic Lithuanians	45
Czechoslovakia	49
Slovaks only	69
Czechs only	38
Scandinavia	46

Attend Church At Least Weekly

Ireland	82%
United States	43
Spain	41
Italy	36
West Germany	21
Czechoslovakia	17
Ethnic Lithuanians	15
Other Lithuanians	12
Great Britain	14
Hungary	13
France	12
Scandinavia	5

Average Ratings of Importance of God in One's Life

United States	8.2
Republic of Ireland	8.0
Northern Ireland	7.5
Italy	6.9
Spain	6.4
Finland	6.2
Belgium	5.9
Great Britain	5.7
West Germany	5.7
Norway	5.4
Netherlands	5.3
Hungary	4.8
France	4.7
Denmark	4.4

"Organized Religion" Leaders Do Not Always Inspire Confidence

NEW YORK—Only one person in five (20%) expresses a "great deal" of confidence in the "people in charge of running ... organized religion," according to a Harris Poll taken in November 1990. This places organized religion in seventh place, behind other U.S. institutions such as the military, medicine, colleges and universities, the U.S. Supreme Court, television news, and the White House.

This finding, when contrasted with a Gallup Poll during the same period, points up an important difference in how people view the institution of the church and its leadership. In the Gallup Poll respondents are not asked about the leadership of organized religion but about "the church or organized religion." On this institutional basis, 33% of the adults interviewed in 1990 expressed a "great deal" of confidence, second only to the military among the institutions tested on the survey.

Both question wordings are equally valid, and their comparison yields insight to how the public may distinguish between institutions and their leadership.

Great deal of confidence in ...

	Church (Gallup)	Leadership (Harris)
1990	33%	20%
1989	30	16
1984	41	24
1981	30	22
1977	38	29

The illuminated capital letters in this month's issue were created in America in the twentieth century. The style is called "Cloister."

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PRRC emerging trends

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Armaggedon in the Persian Gulf?

Prophesiers of Armageddon have yet to be interviewed on CNN, but preliminary reports from publishers and Christian bookstores have indicated that books on the subject are enjoying impressive new popularity. For 15% of Americans, the War in the Gulf, with reports and datelines from places such as Babylon, Jerusalem and Nineveh, is seen as fulfillment of the prophesy of the final great battle of Armaggedon before Judgement Day, as recorded in Revelations. Three persons in four (74%) do not believe this will be the final battle, and 11% are undecided on the matter.

Thoughts of Armaggedon are strongest among those who say religion is very important in their lives (19%). Far less belief is found among people who say religion is only somewhat important (11%), but even among those who say religion is not very important in their lives, eight percent feel Armaggedon may be imminent.

Women are more likely than men to believe this will be the final battle, by a margin of 18% to 11%. Interestingly, belief of impending Armageddon is strongest among the young, with nearly one person in four (23%) who is between the ages of 18 and 29, holding this view. Within this age group, young women (28%) more often than young men (18%) feel the war in the Persian Gulf may be fulfilling biblical prophesy.

Visions of Armaggedon are less frequent among older adults. Only 13% of the those who are ages 30 to 49 believe in it, and belief is found among just 11% of those who are 50 or older. It is particularly noteworthy in this context that younger people are more often expecting Armaggedon, since on most survey measurements older people tend more often to express biblically inspired beliefs.

In more secular terms, nearly three people in four are very worried (32%) or somewhat worried (40%) that the situation in the Persian Gulf will develop into a larger war that could spread throughout the region and into other parts of the world. Not too worried are 19%, and 8% say they are not worried at all about the war spreading.

Power of Prayer

Over half of the populace (58%) report they have prayed more than usual since the beginning of the war. A similar percentage (59%) believe their prayers can be very effective in a situation like the one now faced in the Persian Gulf. An additional 22% say they think praying can be fairly effective. Disagreeing with the power of prayer in this situation are 14% who believe it may not be very effective, and 5% who are undecided on the matter.

The questions were asked as follows:

"Some people feel that this Middle Eastern war means Armageddon, the final great battle before Judgement Day, predicted in the Bible. Do you think this war is Armageddon, or not? How worried are you that the current situation in the Persian Gulf will develop into a larger war that could spread throughout the region and other parts of the world—Would you say you are very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried about that? As a result of the beginning of the war in the Persian Gulf, have you ... prayed more than you usually do? How effective do you think prayers can be in a situation like this one in the Persian Gulf—very effective, fairly effective, or not very effective?"

The findings are based on interviews with a nationwide cross-section of 1,011 adults, ages 18 and older, interviewed for the Gallup Poll during the period of January 17–20, 1991—in the early days of the war.

Religious Research in the 1990s — Part II

Reported by Robert Wuthnow

C. Ethical Consequences of Spirituality

1. Causal links between religion and behavior

Past efforts to find law-like scientific regularities between religious commitment and attitudes and behavior failed because correlations proved to be too dependent upon contexts and situations.

Modern research suggests it is more fruitful to examine beliefs that result in behavior if they occur within a supportive community.

We also need to know if belief affects behavior best when it is distilled into propositional knowledge such as moral dictums, or is more consequential when it occurs in narrative form.

2. Biblical models in the secular culture

Have biblical models dropped out entirely, so that even some seminary programs on ethics pay more attention to Bentham and Rawls than to Leviticus and Romans? Maybe biblical models haven't dropped out, but have gone underground, and public figures draw on them unconsciously or, if consciously, translate them into secular metaphors. Maybe even the stories and parables learned in Sunday School as children continue to influence ethical decisions in adult life in profound ways.

- Do people believe in transcendent sources of value or is everything based on human reason?
- Are the Ten Commandments known? How do they serve as moral guides?
- What are the root metaphors in our culture? The Good Samaritan, the rugged pioneer, or "looking out for Number One"?
- What is our total intake of stories from television, personal encounters, reading and church?

3. Spirituality and prosocial behavior

Religion has an important impact upon voluntarism.

- Do small church groups play a special role in encouraging helping behavior?
- Is there a special style of spirituality that encourages altruism?
- What can churches learn from secular volunteer programs?
- Do churches encourage only traditional kinds of caring and ignore others?

4. The new bioethical challenges

Ethical questions are becoming increasingly specialized and dependent upon narrow disciplines, scientific knowledge and new technologies.

Valuable research could result from interviewing scientists, professionals and lawmakers to combine their profession concerns with broader questions about religion and values. This already is needed on subjects such as abortion and euthanasia; we can only guess what the other topics will be over the decade.

D. The Challenges of Cultural Pluralism

1. New tribalism or new individualism?

Studies demonstrated that strong governments encouraged privatization and individual withdrawal from public life. Now in Eastern Europe we are seeing the reassertion of national and ethnic identity, a new tribalism. Some say, first it will be Lithuania, then Quebec, and then California.

Interest in small religious groups may be the inevitable outcome of living in diverse worlds and wanting to find people like ourselves. We are lucky if we can find half a dozen people in a church of 2,000 that we truly like to be with. Our "tribes" become smaller, as we band together with people around increasingly specialized interests—our demons of the moment. If our demon is alcohol, we go to AA. If it is work-ahol, we join the vestry.

2. Ethnic/racial pride vs. ethnic/racial conflict

The old melting pot question is being reheated: Is tolerance and public life best served by blending with others, or do strong ethnic and racial fences somehow make us better neighbors?

Churches in diverse communities face this issue head on. If members want to remain homogeneous, how do they relate to their communities? Respect is a key, but how do disadvantaged people gain enough self-confidence to respect others? Can this self-confidence truly be gained in homogeneous groups, or is interaction in diverse settings required?

3. Islamic growth in the United States

The exact statistics are not clear, but it is obvious the Islamic population has grown and will continue to grow. Its presence brings new challenges to the Judaeo-Christian community.

What are the public's attitudes towards Muslims? How much interfaith cooperation is desired? Is anything significant happening at the local level already?

4. Public discourse

Cultural pluralism means we speak many languages and use words that have many meanings. Are we able to communicate at all, or do we merely talk past each other, leaving the real choices to the powerful or to

the blind workings of the marketplace.

Do any religious symbols still have importance in public discourse? Do public prayers carry unifying weight at political conventions? What about crosses carried at anti-abortion rallies?

Religious language seems more to divide Americans than to unite them. Is religion actually a polite way of labeling and masking deeper social divisions? We call people Black Muslims, but maybe we really mean black nationalists. How do we get at these underlying divisions?

It would be a valuable methodological project to experiment with alternative ways of asking questions about religion in, say, Black, Anglo, Hispanic and Asian communities.

E. The Spiritual Needs of Youth

1. Spiritual and moral education

Fewer and fewer children may be receiving religious education in the churches. In diverse communities many children do not go to church because they know nobody there, churches may pare down offerings because there are fewer teachers, and young parents may not have had religious education themselves.

What was said earlier about faith literacy applies doubly for youth. We need to find out what they know, how they know, and how likely it is their knowledge could be increased.

2. What is the religious consciousness of youth?

A generation ago, we paid much attention to the so-called new religious consciousness of young adults. A whole new generation has emerged, with even greater cultural options, but we know little of their beliefs and aspirations.

3. How can we minister to 18–30 year-olds?

The long-term future of the church of course is in the hands of young people who usually are not involved in the church during their salad days. What are their needs? For personal meaning? For support and belonging? Where are these needs being met? What can the church do?

Is this cohort subject to more economic pressures and declining expectations for careers and incomes? Is this having a negative impact on self-images? Can spiritual resources enhance self-esteem?

What are the implications of the cultural uncertainty and rampant religious relativism faced by young people when making their most important life decisions about marriage, careers, and families?

4. What do we know about exemplary youth?

What about some positive models? Study youth to see their good works. Identify the volunteers, the spiritually motivated, and the leaders, so that others can see them as role models.

F. Religious Resources for the Disadvantaged

1. What can/should black churches do?

A wall of fear has emerged between the "haves" and the "have nots" in our society. Even the generous are afraid to reach out to the truly disadvantaged. Many of the disadvantaged are black, especially young black males. The family has broken down, the schools have been ineffective, and it is questionable if there are any sources of potential institutional support beyond the church. It reaches probably 70% of the black population on a regular basis, but this probably does not include the truly disadvantaged. The potential is there.

There are real or imagined barriers that impede the black clergy to use resources at their disposal. Research is needed to determine:

- Do members of black churches support or oppose various kinds of community involvement?
- Are they willing to give time and money for various causes?
- What are their concerns about church-state conflicts when cooperating with government programs?

2. What ever happened to "economic justice"?

Apart from voluntarism, little is said anymore about economic justice and other kinds of structural reform. Maybe economic justice needs to be rethought in a way that combines structural reform with a greater sense of individual responsibility. The disadvantaged need help, but they also need conviction. Research could show what combinations of ideas are likely to have greatest impact on varying segments of the disadvantaged population.

3. How can the mentally ill be helped?

Many of the mentally ill, who formerly were cared for have been dumped on the streets by deinstitutionalization.

What current or untapped resources do the churches have to deal with this problem? Could greater use be made of volunteers specially trained to help, or of church members skilled in social work or therapy?

Conclusions

These are vital concerns facing all religious communities in our society. The have practical implications for our nation's health. They bear heavily upon, but also go beyond, the interests of denominational officials and clergy. They are matters of great civic importance. They call for major research projects to be initiated that advance knowledge beyond the narrow disputes of academic disciplines and denominational boundaries. Urgently needed are creative research initiatives to examine the practical dimensions of these issues and to disseminate results to those who will put this information to use.

Robert Wuthnow is Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, and a Trustee of the George H. Gallup International Institute.

What Every Pastor ...

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sequence of not being loved or appreciated. Low self-esteem brings with it a host of social problems, including alcohol and drug abuse, child and spouse abuse, lawlessness and crime.

Significantly, we have discovered that the closer people feel to God, the better they feel about themselves. They are also more satisfied with their lives than are others, more altruistic, enjoy better health, and have a happier outlook. Furthermore, we have found that experiencing the closeness of God is a key factor in the ability of people to forgive themselves and others.

4. The need to be listened to—to be heard. The main theme in our book, *The People's Religion*, is that religion in the future is more likely to be shaped from the bottom up than by the top down: from the people in the pews rather than by the hierarchy. In a special survey conducted for this book, we discovered that Americans overwhelmingly think the future of the church will be shaped to a greater extent by the laity than by the clergy. Not only do they think it will happen, they believe also that it *should* happen.

In specific terms this means, for example, that the laity should play a greater role in the church, freeing up clergy to perform what the laity expects of them: to listen to people's religious needs and to provide spiritual counseling and inspiration. When the unchurched in one survey were asked what would most likely draw them back into the community of active worshippers, the lead reason given was "if I could find a pastor, priest or rabbi with whom I could share my religious needs and doubts."

If churches do not heed the voice of the laity for a greater say in the way churches are run, they will continue to lose vitality and will not be able to reverse the downtrends in membership.

The clergy need to listen more carefully to what the laity are saying, both in one-on-one discussions, and well as in group sessions. One way to enhance the listening process is to undertake carefully designed surveys of church members, as well as of those who are currently unchurched.

5. The need to feel that one is growing in faith. People do not like to suffer periods of spiritual stagnation, and the fact is we go through passages in our faith lives, just as we do in our secular lives. Seven Americans in 10 say they have experienced a change in faith during their lifetimes.

It would appear that, basically, people aspire to lead good lives. Significant numbers of people have given thought to living a worthwhile life, to their relationship to God, to the basic meaning and value of their lives, and to developing their faith.

Churches need to pay close attention to the passages people experience in their faith lives, and to religious experiences which often change the course of one's life. People need help in understanding the significance of these experiences and in building upon them.

6. The need for practical help in developing a mature faith. The clergy often tend to make assumptions about the depth of religious commitment in the lives of members of their churches—to assume that their prayer life is more developed, and that people have a higher level of knowledge about their faith and the traditions of their denomination—than actually is the case. Clergy therefore can often find themselves in the unfortunate situation of trying to win support for programs and causes from a laity that is spiritually listless and uninformed.

A close look at where people are in their spiritual lives, and the level of their knowledge, would shock most clergy: We read the Bible, but we are a nation of biblical illiterates. We pray and believe in the power of prayer, but do not give our prayer life the attention it deserves. We believe the Ten Commandments to be valid rules of life, but we are unable to name many of them. We would be hard pressed to defend our faith, because we are uncertain about what we believe, let alone why we believe.

Ungrounded in biblical faith many are vulnerable and are drawn to a wide variety of bizarre spiritual movements. For example, a large percentage of teen-agers today believe in superstitions such as astrology. Through inattention on the part of churches, and lethargy on the part of the laity and for other reasons, the churches of our nation have permitted a huge spiritual vacuum to develop; one which is drawing in millions of unwitting and unsuspecting Americans.

We need to work toward closing the gap between belief and practice—we need to turn professed faith into live-out faith. What is called for are not new committees, new strategies or position papers; we need nothing less than changed hearts.

Two major challenges face all churches: To reach as many people as possible, and to reach them as deeply as possible, to broaden the church itself and deepen it. Perhaps the deepening process should come first, because parishioners must first be prepared and equipped before they can be effective in evangelistic efforts.

Thanks to the unprecedented level of freedom in the United States, Americans are able to make choices about their future. These choices, many believe, apply most deeply at the religious level: Will we choose the living God, or will we choose the substitute gods of the modern age—money, possessions, fame, drugs, a self-indulgent lifestyle? Will our religion be God-given or man-made? To quote Rev. Peter Moore, an Episcopal priest in *Disarming the Secular Gods*, "We have no significance, health or happiness save that which comes when we surrender the allusion of being the center of the universe and joyfully celebrate God at that center."

What Every Pastor Should Know About the Average American

By George Gallup, Jr.

Editor's note: This column is taken from a talk given by George Gallup, Jr. at the meeting of the Theological Students Fellowship, Princeton Theological Seminary, on December 10, 1990.

or 55 years we have surveyed Americans on a wide range of topics, but we really cannot tell you much about the individual average American. As Sir Arthur Conan Doyle once said: "While the individual man is an unsoluble mystery, in the aggregate he becomes a mathematical certainty." Indeed, each of the five billion people on the globe is a wonderfully unique creature of God. But through penetrating and repeated surveys we are, hopefully, beginning to learn a great deal more about people in the aggregate, in terms of both their secular and religious lives.

In the analysis that follows, I am really talking about the *composite* American because there is no such thing as the *average* American, save perhaps to say that he or she is middle-aged, with a middle income, with middle-of-the-road views, facing a mid-life crisis, living in the Midwest, possibly in a place called Middletown.

In studying America, our surveys have increasingly played a crucial role in the exploration of the inner life of its people. When scientific surveys came upon the scene in the mid-1930s, it became possible to provide an objective assessment of what people think and believe. Prior to that time, the history of what the average person thought and believed was based largely on educated guesses by novelists, journalists and "arm chair" researchers.

Over the last half-century we have learned a great deal about the breadth of religion, but relatively little about the depth, about the inner life of humankind. The fact is that most social scientists have tended to turn their backs on explorations of the inner life, dismissing it as a subjective realm and therefore not worthy of study. Yet if one were to select the most important dynamic in the life of Americans that explains our uniqueness and character, it would be, not politics, not educational level, not region of the country, but the religious dynamic.

The new frontier of social research is, I believe, the inner life. The last half of the current century has been dedicated to the exploration of outer space. The next century, I think we may assume, will be dedicated to exploring inner space. There are undoubtedly many exciting discoveries ahead as we seek to probe beneath the surface of lives. Having said this, however, I should hasten to add there are obvious limitations to the depth of exploration possible.

Yet I believe that carefully conceived and executed surveys that penetrate beneath the surface of lives can help build up the body of Christ and further the kingdom of God. It is my belief that, since the vast majority of the people of the world believe in God or a power outside ourselves, the most profound purpose and worthy pursuit of scientific surveys is to probe the response of humanity to God, to the extent that this is possible.

Now, I would like turn to six basic spiritual needs of Americans at this point in history (apart from their natural needs for such things as food, clothing and shelter) and to explore the question of whether churches are relating to these needs, as well as to discuss possible steps to help churches better meet these needs.

1. The need to believe that life is meaningful and has a purpose. During a time when sociologists observe an obsession with self in America, 70% of Americans nevertheless believe it is very important that life is meaningful and has a purpose. Yet now as many as two-thirds of people interviewed believe that "most churches and synagogues today are not effective in helping people find meaning in life." Here is a basic need apparently being only partially met. The fact is, significant numbers of people find churches irrelevant, unfulfilling and boring.

2. The need for a sense of community and deeper relationships. Many factors conspire to cause separateness in our society. At a personal level there is high mobility, divorce, and the breakup of families. In the aggregate, the world is becoming increasingly impersonal with the growth of megacities, multinational corporations, and bureaucracies. "Radical individualism" has taken hold in the religious lives of Americans. The large majority of Americans, for example, now believe that one can be a good Christian or Jew if one does not attend church or synagogue.

One of the poignant consequences to this separateness is loneliness. As we have discovered from surveys, as many as three persons in 10 say they have been lonely "for a long period of time" in their lives, with half of these people saying this experience has affected their thoughts "a great deal."

Our churches, synagogues and other faith communities need to deal frontally with the separateness and acute loneliness in our society by encouraging corporate worship, as well as participation in small groups. Small groups, rooted in prayer and Bible study, may be the best hope for a renewed church in the 1990s.

3. The need to be appreciated and respected. This is certainly a basic and fundamental need, yet as many as one-third of the American people have a low sense of self-worth or self-esteem, as a direct con-

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Teens Give Clergy Top Grades

Most teens in a recent Gallup Youth Survey said local priests, ministers and rabbis deserve above-average grades for community service. According to the teen-age report card, 52% say the local clergy should be graded an "A," and 29% as "B" for their work in the community. Just 9% of the teens consider the clergy an average "C," and very few would mark them as a "D" (2%) or failing (1%). The remaining 7% of teens held no opinion.

The local clergy most often get an A from teen-agers living in the South (58%), and least frequently from those residing in western states (44%).

Among the local community services tested in the survey, the 81% total of A or B grades received by the local clergy from teens was surpassed only by top grades given by 91% to fire fighters and 84% to local libraries. Less often receiving above-average grades from teens were teachers (76%), the local police (74%), local youth and recreational program leaders (73%), sanitation workers (73%) welfare program directors (69%), and mayors (61%).

Ratings were obtained through the question, "Students are most often given grades A, B, C, D and FAIL for the quality of their work. Suppose services in your own community were graded this way, what mark would you give each of the following ... local priests, ministers or rabbis?"

The findings are based on telephone interviews with a nationwide sample of 500 teen-agers, 13 through 17, conducted during the period of October 12–28, 1990.

Bibles in the Gulf

The New York Times reports that despite stories of Saudi Arabian censorship of Judaeo-Christian symbols, half a million copies of the Bible are being sent to the Persian Gulf area for use by American military personnel. Their covers will be in the now familiar brown and tan desert camouflage so often seen on television

About 300,000 copies containing both the Old and New Testaments are being sent by the American Bible Society. In addition, the International Bible Society is sending 200,000 copies of the New Testament in desert garb.

The illuminated capital letters in this month's issue were printed in France in the sixteenth century.

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The Impact of War on Modern Religious Trends in the U.S.

By George Gallup, Jr.

Preaching on the battlefield in Bataan in 1942, Father William Thomas Cummings said, "There are no atheists in foxholes." Among the people on the home front in the United States at that time, religious practice grew stronger. From the perspective of 50 years of Gallup Polls on religious practice during periods of war and peace, we find that war usually, but not always, draws people closer to prayer and to the church.

Concern about World War II caused increasing numbers of Americans, especially young adults, to turn to the Bible. In addition, the war appears to have generated a gradual upward trend in church attendance and in church membership in the U.S.

Church membership grew from 72% of the adult population in 1940 to 76% in 1947. Church attendance increased from 37% who attended in a typical week of 1940 to 39% in 1950 at the outset of the Korean War.

During the period of the Korean and Cold Wars, church attendance rose further to 49% in measurements taken in 1955 and 1958.

This upsurge in religious interest was followed by a downturn in church attendance, membership, and the importance people placed on religion in their lives. The Vietnam War and the protests it generated in the 1960s and early 1970s, if not a direct cause of this downtrend, appear to have accelerated it.

The Vietnam War, in contrast to earlier conflicts, may have had a negative effect on religion (at least in terms of religious practice and confidence in organized religion). In all fairness to religion, however, it should be remembered that there was a strong anti-establishment mood among young people during the period, beginning with opposition to U.S. involvement in Vietnam and culminating with the Watergate debacle. This mood led to a distrust of many key institutions in our society, including the church. Alternately, it also marked a period when many young people were actively experimenting with cults, counter-movements, eastern religions, and other non-traditional beliefs.

As a consequence, church membership was 73% in 1965 and 71% in 1975. Church attendance declined from 47% in 1960 to 40% in 1975. Those who said religion is important in their lives declined from 70% in 1965 to 52% in 1978. Those who gave no religious affiliation increased from 2% in 1962 to 5% in 1972. Frequency of prayer, as measured by those stating they pray twice a day or more, declined from 41% in 1965 to 27% in 1978.

Most damagingly, in terms of perceptions, those who said religion was increasing its influence on America fell from 38% in 1965 to 14% in 1970. Those who believe religion can answer the problems of society from 81% in 1957 to 62% in 1974.

In the aftermath of the Vietnam era, religion began gradually to recover lost ground, only to be rocked from within by the televangelist scandals. But even these did not seem to have had more than a temporary effect as early indications in the past two years have suggested the public might be turning to the church once again.

The church in particular once more was a leader among institutions inspiring confidence among the public. Remarkably, in recent years it has placed second to the U.S. military which, well before the Persian Gulf situation and conflict, has become first among most trusted institutions. The ubiquitous yellow ribbons on the Persian Gulf stand in stark contrast to the televised sights of flag burning during the Vietnam era.

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The illuminated capital letters in this month's issue were created in the U.S. in the early 20th century. The style is called "Empire."

Was It a Just War?

The Persian Gulf War and the events leading up to it provided a rare insight to the processes of public opinion formation as leaders and citizens alike agonized over decisions that could lead to war or to peace. Between the time Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990 and the air war began on January 16, 1991, the public witnessed intensive debate in the halls of Congress and the United Nations about sanctions, peaceful alternatives, and the possibility of war. Several commentators noted that President Bush and the coalition he led were particularly careful during this period to state that their objectives were moral and "just."

The events in Kuwait and the Persian Gulf area had a profound impact upon the public's attitude towards war, itself. For 20 years in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the American public was sharply divided in its views towards war, with an average of 47% believing it is an outmoded way of settling differences between nations, 45% saying it is sometimes necessary, and 8% undecided. As recently as March 1990, a similar halving of opinion was found, with 48% saying war is outmoded and 49% believing it to be sometimes necessary.

Less than one year later in early February 1991, in a dramatic change of opinion, eight Americans in 10 (80%) expressed the belief that war is sometimes necessary. Only 17% now believe it is an outmoded method, and 3% are undecided.

Additional questioning elicited information that the public may be highly selective in deciding which wars are "just" and which are not. Only one person in four (25%) now concludes that the Vietnam War was just. Only about half (49%) think the Korean police action was justified. By comparison, 89% feel World War II was a just cause, and high marks in this respect also are given to the War of Independence (75%) and World War I (76%). The Civil War, which many people had just relived through a highly acclaimed special PBS television series, now is considered just by 70% of the public.

The Persian Gulf War was judged to be just by 74% of the public. The conclusion would appear to be that the public for the past 20 years was not totally rejecting the concept of war as being sometimes justified, but instead may have been reflecting its disapproval of America's military involvement in Vietnam and Korea.

"Just" War Principles

Adherents of all faiths have struggled to reconcile religious principles with the brutal events of war since the beginnings of recorded history. Christians were not exceptional in this respect, and it was not until the 4th century that Augustine first promulgated the principle that war could be waged for a just cause. By the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas stated three additional elements that must be present for a just war, and later Catholic and Protestant theologians refined these principles and added others.

In the modern era there are now six widely recognized principles that must be met if a war is to be considered just by the devout, and Gallup surveyed the American public on their opinion of whether they felt these tenets applied to the Persian Gulf War. The result was that each of the six principles individually met approval from a majority of Americans, but collectively, only about half of those surveyed (49%) indicated approval of all six principles.

Nearly all of the respondents (95%) agreed that "there is a reasonable likelihood that the military action will succeed," including 76% who "strongly" agreed. Note that this finding stands in stark contrast to one of the most frequently stated objections to the Vietnam War from hawk and dove alike that there "was never a light at the end of the tunnel" in that conflict.

The high degree of unanimity among members of the United Nations in invoking sanctions against Iraq and by the majority of the members of Congress in endorsing President Bush's actions may have led to the opinion held by many that "The military action has been undertaken by responsible authorities; that is, by a recognized leader of a nation or leaders of a group of nations." Almost nine persons in 10 (87%) believed this condition had been met, including 61% who felt strongly so.

Similarly, the careful exploration of sanctions, patient review of diplomatic alternatives, extended deadlines, and use of an air war before the land invasion took place, may have led three Americans in four (76%) to believe that "the military action was taken as a 'last resort,' that is all attempts to resolve the conflict peacefully were exhausted." A majority (56%) strongly agreed that this had been done. Once the ground war began, 84% of the U.S. population in a February 24 Gallup Poll said they approved of the decision to begin that phase of the offensive, and 81% felt President Bush had given sufficient time for the Soviet and other diplomatic efforts to end the war to be given a chance before deciding to start the land campaign.

The precision bombing of the air war, which was so dramatically depicted by gun cameras, certainly may have led many to believe that the low number of civilian casualties in com-

parison to past wars was in keeping with the requirement that "the military action is likely to avoid harming civilians where possible." Strongly agreeing that this was the case were 43% of the respondents, while an additional 28% agreed somewhat.

On balance, nearly three Americans in four (72%) felt that in the Persian Gulf War "the good that will be achieved by the military action will clearly outweigh the harm that may be done." Four in 10 respondents (40%) agreed strongly.

Finally, examining their consciences, eight persons in 10 felt "there is a 'just' cause for taking the military action; that is, a moral reason." Agreeing strongly were a majority of 54%, while 26% believed somewhat strongly that this fundamental principle had been met. With the apparent backing of the American people, President Bush proclaimed victory to the U.S. Congress with the words, "We went half way around the world to do what is moral and just and right."

The findings are based on telephone interviews with a randomly selected national sample of 1,013 adults, 18 and older, conducted between February 7 to 10, 1991, shortly before the land campaign began in the Persian Gulf War. For samples of this size, one can say with 95 percent confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Was The Persian Gulf War Just?

Here are six statements about the U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf War. Please tell me if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with each statement.

	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly
Reasonable likelihood the military action will succeed	76%	19%	2%	2%
Military action has been undertaken by responsible authorities	61	26	6	3
Military action was taken as a last resort -- all peace attempts were exhausted	56	21	9	11
There is a just, moral cause for taking military action	54	26	7	10
Military action is likely to avoid harming civilians where possible	43	28	13	13
The good achieved by military action will clearly outweigh the harm that may be done	40	32	10	13

"No opinion," 1% to 5%, omitted.

Is War Outmoded?

Some people feel that war is an outmoded way of settling differences between nations. Others feel that wars are sometimes necessary to settle differences. With which point of view do you agree?

	Outmoded	Sometimes necessary	No opinion
February 1991	17%	80%	3%
March 1990	48	49	3
1981	50	43	7
1975	45	46	9
1971	46	43	11

Opinion of "Just Wars"

As I read a list of the wars the United States has been involved in, please tell me, for each, whether you think it to be a "just" war, or not.

	"Just"	Not Just	No opinion
Revolutionary War	76%	9%	15%
Civil War	70	19	11
World War I	76	8	16
World War II	89	5	6
Korean War	49	32	19
Vietnam War	25	65	10
Persian Gulf War	74	21	5

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Attending Church and Voluntarism Important Civic Traits in Opinion of Teens

America's teen-agers often reject wealth and instead stress voluntarism and attendance of religious services as important civic virtues. Nine teens in 10 say that doing charitable or voluntary work in the community is a very important (51%) or somewhat important (41%) factor of being a good citizen. Previous Gallup surveys have consistently demonstrated strong linkage between religion and voluntarism, and so it is not surprising that attending religious services also is considered an important civic trait by three teens in four. Religious attendance is very important in the opinion of 36% and somewhat important by 37% of the teens. Rejecting the importance of religious attendance as a civic virtue are 18% of the teens who say it is of little importance and 8% who believe it is of no importance at all.

By comparison, the accumulation of a large sum of money is considered very important by only 26% of the teens, and somewhat important by 37%.

Teens living in the South (44%) and Midwest (40%) are more likely than those from the East (25%) or West (32%) to consider religious attendance to be very important.

Young women are more likely than young men to believe that charitable and voluntary efforts are very important, by a margin of 56% to 46%. Also attaching higher-than-average importance to voluntarism are non-white teens (58%), and those who live in the Midwest (57%).

The findings are based on telephone interviews with a national cross section of 500 teenagers, 13 through 17, conducted during the period of October 12-28, 1990 by the Gallup Youth Survey.

Very Important Civic Traits

How important do you think the following are for someone to be a good citizen of this country: very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important... Going to religious services regularly? Do charitable or voluntary work in the community ? Earn a lot of money?

	Voluntarism	Religious attendance
National	51%	36%
Male	46	37
Female	56	36
Ages 13-15	51	38
Ages 16-17	50	34
White	48	38
Non-white	58	30
Above-average students	54	39
Average and below	44	33
East	46	25
Midwest	57	40
South	50	44
West	50	32

The Impact of War on Modern Religious Trends in the U.S.

(continued from page 1)

In the days just prior to the January 15 deadline imposed by the United Nations as debates and tensions mounted among the people of this country, a survey showed 57% of Americans saying they were praying more than usual. Little change was recorded in the level of church membership, in a survey conducted soon after military action was initiated, while the percentage attending church in a typical week remained at the highest level recorded in nearly three decades, continuing the modest upward trend that has been building over the past four years. Basically, these initial results suggest an upturn in private faith, but not in organizational commitment.

Surveys conducted during the first few days of the fighting showed higher percentages than usual saying that religion is "very important" in their lives — 62%. This compares with an average of 55% in the 1980s saying religion was very important to them. Belief in prayer was also strong, with 59% saying they thought their prayers in a situation like the Persian Gulf War were very effective.

The levels of basic religious belief have remained constant throughout war and peace in the past half century. It remains to be seen if the current uptrends in religious practice are the signal of long-term church renewal or are short-termed.

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Final 1990 Trends Show Mixed Results for Religious Practice in America

As Americans entered the 1990s and faced the twin challenges of recession and impending war in Iraq, they also turned more frequently to religion, but this upturn in interest did not always result in increased formal participation in the church. (Preliminary results for early 1991 which we will soon report show increases in the earlier part of this year both in interest in religion and in church attendance.)

Measurements of the importance of religion have been inching up in recent years. In 1990, 56% of the adults interviewed throughout the year said that religion is "very important" in their lives. This continues a trend since 1987 in which the proportion of people giving this answer has increased by a single percentage point annually, so that the number has gradually risen from 53% in 1987 to the current figure of 56%. The current level matches the high marks of the early 1980s, but still is well short of the peaks attained in the 1950s and 1960s when at least seven Americans in 10 considered religion important in their lives.

In addition to the 56%, in 1990 who say religion is very important in their lives, there are 30% of Americans who consider it somewhat important. But 13%, feel is not very important and 1% are unable to make up their minds about its importance to them.

The profile of those considering religion very important remains unchanged from that noted in the past. Religion is of comparatively greater importance to people over 50 years of age (69%) and women (63%) than to young people (46%) or to men (48%). Blacks (77%) are far more likely to consider it very important than are other non-whites (54%) or whites (53%).

Protestants more often than Catholics state that religion is very important in their lives by a margin of 63% to 51%. Jews are more inclined to regard religion as somewhat important (50%) than as very important (20%) to them.

Attendance Trends

1990	40%
1989	43
1988	42
1987	40
1985	42
1983	40
1982	41
1981	41
1970s	40
1960s	44
1950s	46
1940s	37
1930s	41

Membership Trends

1990	65%
1989	68
1988	65
1987	69
1985	71
1983	69
1982	67
1970s	70
1960s	72
1950s	73
1940s	76
1930s	73

The illuminated capital letters in this month's issue are an arabesque style used in America in the nineteenth century.

Importance of Religion - 1990

How important would you say religion is in your own life: very important, somewhat important, or not very important?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not Very important
Total	56%	30%	13%
Gender			
Male	48	32	18
Female	63	28	9
Age			
18-29	41	43	15
30-49	51	32	16
50 and older	69	19	10
Race			
Whte	53	32	14
Black	77	17	4
Other	54	25	15
Education			
College Graduate	48	30	20
Attended College	53	32	14
High School Graduate	55	33	11
Non-H.S. graduate	67	22	10
Annual Household Income			
$50,000 and over	47	30	21
$30,000-$49,999	50	35	14
$20,000-$29,999	57	30	12
Under $20,000	61	28	10
Region			
East	51	33	15
Midwest	54	35	10
South	66	24	8
West	47	28	23
Religious Preference			
Protestant	63	28	9
Catholic	51	38	11
Jewish	20	50	30
None	27	24	44

"No opinion" (1%, nationally) omitted.

Membership in a church or synagogue has been going up and down in recent years, and 1990 was no exception to this trend. Throughout 1990, about two Americans in three (65%) reported they were members. Recognize that these were self-reports and local church officials might on occasion be surprised by those who either claimed they were or were not members! By the same token, at the national level some denominations use methods such as considering someone to be a member from birth or baptism that tend to inflate membership claims.

The long-term trend since these measurements were begun by Gallup in the 1930s has been downward. From the 1930s through the 1970s membership was claimed by at least seven adults in 10. During the 1980s membership dropped in an average year to 68%. The lowest figure recorded during the 1980s decade was 65% in 1988, or the same as now reported for 1990.

The comparatively low membership figures in the West (54%) probably have contributed most to the decline in the national average. Residents in the East are at the national average (65%), but those of the Midwest and South, which of course include the "Bible Belt" states, continue membership at the 70-percent level of prior decades.

Women (7%) are more likely to claim membership than men (61%). Membership rolls also swell as the potential pool gets larger with just over half of adults under 30 (57%) holding membership, compared to 74% of those who are 50 and older. This pattern takes on particular relevance as the baby boom generation matures and brings new members to the fold.

Catholics (74%) are slightly more likely than Protestants (71%) to say they are church members. Two in three Jews (65%) say they hold membership in a synagogue.

Membership - 1990

Do you happen to be a member of a church or a synagogue?

National	65%
Gender	
Male	61
Female	70
Age	
18-29	57
30-49	63
50 and older	74
Race	
White	66
Black	70
Other	51
Education	
College Graduate	69
Attended College	67
High School Graduate	64
Not-H.S. Graduate	64
Annual Household Income	
$50,000 and over	64
$30,000-$49,999	65
$20,000-$29,999	68
Under $20,000	64
Region	
East	65
Midwest	70
South	70
West	54
Religious Preference	
Protestant	71
Catholic	74
Jewish	65
None	14

Counting the number of people in the pews may not be a very accurate barometer of religious need and interest, because going to church or synagogue has been a remarkably steady measurement over the decades. The proportion attending over the years usually has not varied by more than three percentage points. Over the decades one could generally count upon finding about four people in 10 attending services in a typical week. 1990 was no different in this respect, with 40% of the adults interviewed throughout the year saying they attended church or synagogue at least once during the week preceding the time of interview.

Catholics were the most frequent attenders, with 48% saying they had gone to church, compared to 42% of Protestants who gave similar reports. Less than one Jew in four (23%) reported attending services in the previous week throughout 1990.

The West lagged far behind the rest of the nation, with only 30% its people reporting worship service attendance in a typical week. The South reported the highest proportion (44%), but was only slightly ahead of the Midwest (42%) and East (40%) in this respect.

Attendance and membership probably are a "chicken or the egg" question, with above-average attenders mirroring the findings for membership according to demographic characteristics. Women, for example, were more likely than men to attend, by a margin of 44% to 36%. People over 50 (50%) were almost twice as likely as those under age 30 (29%) to be found in church on the weekend. Blacks (49%) more often reported attendance than was true for whites (39%).

Attendance - 1990

Did you, yourself, happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days?

National	40%
Gender	
Male	36
Female	44
Age	
18-29	29
30-49	38
50 and older	50
Race	
White	39
Black	49
Other	32
Education	
College Graduate	46
Attended College	44
High School Graduate	37
Not-H.S. Graduate	37
Annual Household Income	
$50,000 and over	39
$30,000-$49,999	40
$20,000-$29,999	41
Under $20,000	38
Region	
East	40
Midwest	42
South	44
West	30
Religious Preference	
Protestant	42
Catholic	48
Jewish	23
None	11

Attendance of Easter services definitely is strongly a matter of faith, with 86% of those saying that religion is very important in their lives likely to have attended this year. Less likely to have attended are those who consider religion only fairly important (61%), and showing up at Easter was probably just a pro forma appearance for some who say religion is not very important in their lives (18%).

Women (72%) were more likely than men (63%) to have attended Easter services, and if attendees looked younger than usual this year it was because 71% of adults under age 30 planned to attend. As this is the age group least likely to understand the significance of Easter (64%), hopefully, many learned the meaning of the resurrrection for the first time this year.

The results are based on telephone interviews with a randomly-selected national sample of 1,010 adults, 18 and older, conducted between March 1991. For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95 percent confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Trend - Those Considering Religion "Very Important"

1990	56%
1989	55
1988	54
1987	53
1986	55
1985	55
1984	56
1983	56
1982	56
1981	56
1980	55
1978	52
1965	70
1952	75

Who Attended Easter Services?

Do you plan on attending church services this coming Easter Sunday, or not?

	Plan on going	Not going	Not sure
Total	68%	30%	2%
Gender			
Male	63	34	3
Female	72	26	2
Education			
College Graduate	67	32	1
Some College	71	28	1
High School Graduate	69	28	3
Not High School Graduate	64	32	4
Age			
18-29	71	28	1
30-49	66	32	2
50 and older	67	29	4
Region			
East	69	30	1
Midwest	71	27	2
South	71	24	5
West	59	40	1
Religion			
Protestant	72	25	3
Catholic	85	14	1
Religion in life...			
Very Important	86	12	2
Fairly Important	61	35	4
Not Very Important	18	81	1
Church Member	84	14	2
Not a Member	36	61	3
Attended in Last 7 Days	95	4	1
Did Not Attend	48	48	4

Did They Know Why They Were Celebrating Easter?

On a typical Sunday in recent years about 43% of the faithful could be found at worship services on weekends , but this Easter Sunday attendance rose to two persons in three (68%). Not all of those attending, however, may have fully comprehended just what it was they were commemorating on Easter. Three adults in four (75%) when asked were able to explain that Easter celebrates the resurrection or rebirth of Jesus Christ, but among the remaining respondents tested, 11% gave an erroneous reason and 14% admitted they just didn't know what its religious significance may be.

Christians showed somewhat higher-than-average knowledge of this central event in their faith , but even among their ranks were some who could not explain why Easter is celebrated. Protestants and Catholics are statistically the same in this respect, with 80% of Catholics able to give a right answer, compared to 79% of the Protestants. Only slightly better than half of non-Christians (54%) were able to state why Easter is celebrated.

Awareness of the significance of Easter may be a matter of both knowledge and faith. Correct answers about the meaning of Easter are more likely to be given by those who attended college (87%) than by those who did not (68%). Awareness also is greater among people who consider religion to be very important (80%) or fairly important (76%) in their lives than among those who say it is not very important (61%).

Continued on page 4...

Knowledge of the Meaning of Easter

Would you happen to know why Christians celebrate Easter?

	Correct answer	Incorrect	Not sure
Total	75%	11%	14%
Gender			
Male	71	13	16
Female	80	8	12
Education			
College Graduate	88	7	5
Some College	86	8	6
High School Graduate	71	11	18
Not High School Graduate	60	18	22
Age			
18-29	64	15	21
30-49	85	7	8
50 and older	74	12	14
Region			
East	71	10	19
Midwest	81	10	9
South	75	10	15
West	76	13	11
Religion			
Protestant	79	11	10
Catholic	80	10	10
Religion in life...			
Very Important	80	8	12
Fairly Important	76	9	15
Not Very Important	61	22	17
Church Member	82	8	10
Not a Member	62	17	21
Attended in Last 7 Days	84	8	8
Did Not Attend	69	13	18

Study Says Fundamentalism Compromises Scientific Literacy in America

A recent study by Jon Miller of Northern Illinois University reported in the March 1, 1991 issue of *Science* found that overall knowledge of scientific principles is about the same among adults of all ages in Japan and the United States.

The study was conducted by asking people (over 2,000 in each country) whether they agreed or disagreed with seven commonly accepted scientific principles. The average score achieved was about the same in each country, but very different results were obtained for some of the questions. Miller has asserted, for example, that two statements that have potential religious implications--the "Big Bang" theory of the origin of the universe and the Darwinian theory of evolution --have demonstrated in his view that Christian fundamentalism has had a negative impact on U.S. science. Nearly twice as many Japanese answered these statements correctly; that is, in the manner that is accepted by the worldwide scientific community. Biblical literalists, however, generally take exception to those scientific theories.

Miller is quoted as saying "Some areas of science still raise religious tensions in the United States, reducing the percentage of Americans who would qualify as scientifically literate."

The statement on the Big Bang theory was worded as "the universe began with a huge explosion," while the theory concerning evolution was stated as "human beings developed from earlier species of animals."

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What Churches Can Do To Understand and Help Prevent Teen Suicide

Our churches celebrate life, death, and resurrection, but may meet one of their greatest challenges in helping to prevent the unnecessary death of young people through suicide. A majority of young people think that most (27%) or at least some (35%) people of their own age have thought about committing suicide. Among the remaining teens interviewed, 23% feel only a few members of their generation have thought about it, and 15% think virtually none have contemplated suicide. On a more personal level, six teens in 10 (60%) say they know someone who has tried to commit suicide.

One in three of those who were known to have attempted suicide were judged by the teens who knew them to have been very (4%) or somewhat (30%) "religious." The others were felt to have been not very (41%) or not at all (23%) religious.

As for themselves, slightly over half (52%) of the teens reported that they have discussed the topic of suicide with friends or others. About one in three (35%) took the further step of talking or thinking about committing suicide. Fifteen percent said they came close to attempting suicide at some point, and 6% actually made an attempt at taking their own lives. The reasons that they were still alive to talk about their survival are diverse, but most center upon an affirmation of life; e.g., "Nothing is worth killing yourself for," "things will get better," or "life is important."

Drug and alcohol abuse head the list of reasons that young people feel can lead teens to consider suicide. Drug abuse is singled out as the most important cause by one teen in five.

Parental difficulties, problems in growing up, and peer pressures receive prominent mention as potential causes of suicidal behavior. The problems of growing up are most frequently mentioned as the leading cause (22%).

Satanic cults, the morbid attire and lyrics of "heavy metal" rock groups, and the gloom and doom of playing the game of "Dungeons and Dragons," are all named as potential contributing causes of teen suicide. Comparatively few young people, however, believe any of these are a leading cause.

Also playing a role are such diverse factors as economic woes, teen-age pregnancy, AIDS, gangs, and school problems. Four teens in 10 mention suicidal thoughts can be triggered by others who have talked about it or have done it.

Role of the Church

Nearly half of the teens (47%) suggest that if a friend were considering suicide, a member of the clergy would be someone from whom they should seek help.

Only 28% report, however, that the churches and synagogues of their community are now doing anything to prevent teen suicide. By comparison, 41% say the local schools are doing something about the problem, and 21% say actions are being taken by their local community.

Half of those who say the churches are doing something about teen suicide report their role is to offer activities or spiritual alternatives to acts of self-destruction. More directly, they say that churches are discussing the problem with teens, offering counseling services and support groups, and conducting meetings and awareness sessions on the issue. Those who do not currently have these activites generally would like to see the local churches institute them.

Asked specifically about facilities that churches could offer, teens strongly endorse drop-in centers, counseling services, alternative activites, family counseling, and "hot-line" services.

The findings are from a special survey on teen-age suicide conducted by the Gallup Organization for the George H. Gallup International Institute, and are based on combined telephone and mail survey interviews with a representative national cross section of 1,152 teen-agers, 13 through 19, conducted during the period of November 1990 to January 1991.

The illuminated capital letters in this month's issue were created in the U.S. in the early 20th century. The style is called "Acorn."

Opinion of Causes of Teen Suicide

Which of the following reasons (shown below) do you think causes teen-agers to think about committing suicide? Of the possible reasons which is the major or number one reason?

	Causes	Most important cause
Drug abuse	88%	20%
Trouble with parents	86	14
Problems in growing up	83	22
Peer pressures	83	16
Satanic cults	71	17
Alcohol abuse	68	3
School problems	65	3
Teen-age pregnancy	64	3
AIDS	44	3
Gangs	44	3
Other teens talking about or committing suicide	40	1
Economic problems	36	1
Heavy metal music	35	1
Career uncertainties	21	*
Unemployment	19	*
Playing Dungeons & Dragons	15	*
Financing college	12	*
Other	8	4
Don't know	*	2

*Less than one-half of 1 percent.

What Activities Should Churches and Communities Offer to Prevent Teen Suicide?

To prevent teen-agers from considering suicide, should the community (religious organizations) offer:

Community	Churches
Drop-in centers	84%	88%
Counseling	83	89
Alternative activities	82	83
Family counseling	79	80
Hot line	77	92
Counselor training	56	62
Teen shelter	50	64

What Are the Churches Doing?

What are they doing?
What should they do?

	Now[1] doing	Should[2] be doing
Discuss, talk about it	20%	16%
Offer counseling	20	17
Support groups	12	8
Programs, seminars meetings	11	12
Awareness, education, classes	11	7
Be supportive, offer help	3	3
Hot lines	--	5
Shelters	--	4
Offer activities, spiritual alternatives	51	38

[1]Based on those who say churches are now doing something to help.

[2]Based on those who say churches are not doing anything or who "don't know."

How Religious Was Person Who Attempted Suicide?

Did this person appear to be religious?

Very	4%
Somewhat	30
Not very	41
Not at all	23
Don't know	2

Who is Helping Teens to Avoid Suicide?

Is your school doing anything to help teen-agers so they don't consider suicide? So far as you know, is your community (the churches and synagogues) doing anything to prevent teen-agers from considering suicide?

Schools	41%
Churches and synagogues	28
Community	21

The Religious Life of Young Americans

The resources of the George H. Gallup International Institute, the Gallup Youth Survey, the Gallup Organization, and the Princeton Religion Research Center are combined into a new and valuable publication, The Religious Life of Young Americans.

Topics explored in detail include the use and knowledge of the Bible, interest in cults, the appeal of the New Age movement, church membership and attendance.

Publication is planned for Fall 1991. The pre-publication price is $29.95. For more information contact Marie Swirksy, 609-921-6200.

Teens Say Religion Has Little Influence on Their Generation

There may have once been a time when young people drew their inspiration from the ideas of religious leaders or great books, but this is no longer true according to many of the nation's teens. Friends, home, school, music and television all are rated ahead of religion and books as factors teens believe are having the greatest influence upon their generation.

Only 13% of the teens interviewed feel that religion has a great deal of influence and an additional 30% say it has some influence. Disagreeing are a majority of teens, with 28% saying religion has little influence, and another 28% feeling it has very little influence.

Protestant teens (14%) are twice as likely as young Catholics (6%) to believe religion is exerting a great deal of influence upon their generation.

Books earn even less credit, with just 3 percent of the teens saying they believe books have a great deal of influence. "Peer pressure" is the leading factor, named by 87%. High ratings for having a great deal of influence are also given to the home (51%) and school (45%).

Social and religious critics who are concerned about the disproportionate influence of modern music and television upon the younger generation may have good cause to worry. Music is believed to have a great deal of influence by 41% of the teens, and television by 32%. Only 9% of the teens feel that publications have a great deal of influence.

Books and magazines are not the only media to suffer, as only 19 percent of the teens feel that the movies are having a great influenc upon them.

The findings are based on combined telephone and mail survey interviews with a representative national cross section of 1,152 teen-agers, 13 through 19, conducted during the period of November 1990 to January 1991 for the George H. Gallup International Institute.

How Much Influence on Teens?

Do you feel today's teen-agers are influenced a great deal, some, a little, or very little by (the factors listed below)?

	Great deal	Some	Little	Very little
Friends	87%	11%	1%	1%
Home	51	31	14	4
School	45	36	14	5
Music	41	35	17	1
Television	32	43	18	7
Movies	19	48	22	11
Religion	13	30	28	28
Magazines	9	41	32	17
Books	3	23	41	32

No opinion (1%) omitted from some ratings.

Advertisement

Start the 1990s with These Valuable Studies

The Role of the Bible in American Society by George Gallup, Jr. and Robert Bezilla provides a comprehensive overview of attitudes towards the Bible and trends on Bible reading and knowledge of the Scriptures. Cost per copy is $9.95.

Religion in America 1990 - Annual report on the key measures on religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices, and predictions for the 1990s. Cost per copy is $30.

The Unchurched American - 10 Years Later - An important update on the factors that cause people to leave the church, and those that cause them to return. Cost per copy is $29.

100 Questions and Answers by George Gallup, Jr. and Sarah Jones. A single-volume comprendium of the 100 most important questions we have surveyed in the area of religion. A handy reference tool in book size format that categorizes and analyzes key survey data. Price per copy is $30.

Emerging Trends - Commentary on surveys on religious beliefs and practices; 10 issues a year; annual subscription is $35 domestic, $45 foreign. Renew your subscription now while pre-postal rate hike rates are still in effect!

All prices include postage and handling. If you would like to receive more information about these publications, contact the Princeton Religion Research Center, 100 Palmer Square, Suite 213M, Princeton NJ 08542. Telephone (609) 921-8112.

Review Essay
The Varieties of Prayer

Considering how pervasive prayer is in the human experience, it is remarkable how very little empirical research has been done on the subject. Indeed, in contrast to many studies that have been conducted by social scientists on such topics as mystical experiences induced by hallucinogenic drugs or "speaking in tongues," the number of studies conducted on the basic act of praying is ludicrously small. Studies on the impact of prayer are even rarer.

In part this may stem from the attitude of social scientists that prayer is an act of faith, not measurable by objective means; that is, "not falsifiable" according to the standards set by Edward Popper that if a phenomenon cannot be disproven, it is not a suitable subject for scientific inquiry.

There probably would be little argument with this premise. One of the most amusing attempts at scientific measurment of the efficacy of prayer, for example, was made and reported by Francis Galton in 1872. He compared the life expectancy of the royal family in England to that of other affluent Britishers, and found it to be lower than average. He concluded from this that petitionary prayers, most frequently given in the United Kingdom on behalf of royalty, clearly had no demonstrable impact upon their longevity!

The few formal inquiries that have been made into praying behavior generally have been confined to very small samples of college students or members of cloistered religious order members, and are not projectible to the general populace.

Gallup studies have been about the only surveys taken on the subject of prayer among representative national samples of adults. The results have shown over the past 40 years that about nine Americans in 10 pray at one time or another. This overall figure has been constant, but the frequency of prayer seems more variable. Those saying prayers twice or more times a day dropped from 42% in 1952 to 27% in 1978, but rose again to 31% in more recent times. To some extent the overall decline in how often prayers are said may be a function of a drop in frequency in recent years of saying grace before meals.

A new book, **The Varieties of Prayer**, by Margaret M. Poloma, Professor of Sociology at the University of Akron, and George Gallup, Jr., moves beyond these basic figures and reports upon a more comprehensive survey conducted on praying behavior and experiences that was conducted by Gallup in cooperation with the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association in 1988.

The study found that 88% of adults say they "ever pray to God." The kinds of prayers they reported are divided into four basic types:

- 84% are engaged in **conversational prayer** in which they talk with God in their own words, thank him for his blessings, ask for forgiveness of sins, or ask him for his blessings.
- 52% practice **meditative prayer** by quietly thinking about God, trying to listen to God speak to them, spending time worshipping and adoring God, or just "feeling" the presence of God
- **Petitionary prayer** is practiced by 42% of adults, who pray to God to ask him for material things they may need.
- **Ritual praying**, consisting of reading from a book of prayers and reciting memorized prayers, is practiced by 19% of the adults.

The figures reported above are those who have been engaged in all of the listed practices for each of the four basic categories. The actual incidence for individual practices is generally higher, e.g., a remarkable 96% of adults who pray say they thank God for his blessings; 50% recite prayers they have memorized.

Of even greater interest are the findings of what people experience when they pray. In response to a list of suggested experiences, here is what people who pray say happens to them:

- 88% experience a deep sense of peace and well-being.
- 79% have felt a strong presence of God.
- 73% at least once received what they regarded as a definite answer to a specific prayer or request.
- 61% received what they believed to be a deeper insight into a spiritual or Biblical truth.
- 57% felt divinely inspired or "led by God" to perform some specific action.

Those are only the basic unidimensional findings for the survey responses. The book itself goes into far greater detail and rigorous statistical analysis to demonstrate which types of prayers are most prevalent among various sectors of the population according to both their demographic characteristics and their overall religious beliefs and practices. This is done within the framework of extensive quotation and analysis of the writings of social science and theological writers on the subject of prayer, ranging from William Jones and Gordon Allport to Søren Kierkegaard and Thomas Merton.

The book is being published in July 1991 by Trinity Press International. It is 160 pages in length, including statistical tables and references.

--Robert Bezilla

Brits Losing Confidence in the Church

LONDON--A March 1991 study by Social Surveys (Gallup) Ltd. found that only about one Britisher in three has a "great deal" (11%) or "quite a bit" (25%) of confidence in the church. This represents a seven percentage-point drop since 1989 when 43% expressed confidence.

By comparison, in the most recent Gallup Poll, 56% of Americans said they had a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the church.

In both countries, however, the military is at the top of the list. The British attitudes towards their armed forces are particularly high, but it should be remembered that the survey was conducted very shortly after the conclusion of the spectacular military successes of Operation Desert Storm.

Here is a comparison of the two English-speaking countries' attitudes towards their institutions.

(U.K.) Please look at this card and tell me for each item listed how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal, quite a lot, not very much or none at all?
(U.S.) I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one: a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little.

	U.K.	U.S.
Armed forces	91%	68%
Major corporations	47	25
Parliament/Congress	47	24
Courts	41	47
Church	36	56
Schools	33	45
Unions	28	27
The Press	17	39

Many Objected to the Suppression of Religious Symbols in Saudi Arabia

NEW YORK--The war in Iraq created an uneasy alliance between the U.S. and Muslim states in their opposition to Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait. In particular, the presence of American troops in such great numbers in the religiously conservative nation of Saudi Arabia presented conditions that many feared could offend Arab and Muslim sensibilites, and that these could be exploited by Iraq's propagandists to drive a wedge between the Judeo-Christian forces and the Muslim forces facing them. To prevent this from happening, U.S. military leaders imposed rules upon the armed forces under their command to modify their behavior so as not to offend their Muslim hosts.

In a nationwide telephone survey conducted among a representative sample of 1,348 adults by the CBS/ New York Times Poll in early January, many Americans felt that it was right to ban the use of alcoholic beverages by the U.S. armed forces while serving in Saudi Arabia. They were divided in opinion on whether women should be kept away from driving vehicles or working with Saudi soldiers. A clear majority, however, believed the U.S. military went too far in the suppressing the display of Christian and Jewish symbols in public. Only about one person in four supported the ban on symbols.

American armed forces have changed some of their ordinary behavior in order not to offend the strict Muslim cultural traditions in Saudi Arabia. Do you think we are doing the right things or are we going too far...

	Did Right thing	Went too far	Not Sure
Forbidding the use of beer, wine and other alcoholic beverages by soldiers?	63%	29%	8%
Keeping American women soldiers from driving military vehicles off base or working with the Saudi soldiers?	45	44	11
Banning the display of Christian and Jewish religious symbols by soldiers in public?	27	63	10

Role of Small Groups in Spiritual Development is the Focus of Major Study

Small groups and their role in spiritual development may be the focus of a major study by the George H. Gallup International Institute. Principal investigator for the study will be Robert Wuthnow, Professor of Sociolgy at Princeton University. Past studies by The Gallup Institute have shown that participation in small groups is both widespread and frequently important to religious development.

About three adults in 10 (29%) say they belong to a small group that meets regularly and provides support for its participants. Contrary to the image that groups are fads, the majority of participants (60%) report that they have been involved in the activity for three or more years.

A majority of people from all major faiths report the group is an integral part of the activities of their church. Most current members of small support groups say their faith or spirituality has been influenced by their involvement, and nearly all say the experience has deepened their faith. Better than eight in 10 report their group has enabled them to feel better about themselves, be more open and honest with themselves, be better able to forgive others, and to serve people outside the group.

The overall objective of the study is to obtain a better understanding of this powerful force in our society and the ways it can transform individuals to acheive both self-realization and service to others.

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Life Cycle Changes Are Leading to More Frequent Church Attendance

Survey findings from the first half of 1991 offer evidence that church membership and attendance may be slowly regaining lost ground. Particularly heartening are findings that the growth that is taking place is not a temporary phenomenon precipitated by people who flocked to churches during the Persian Gulf War, but appears instead to be the result of natural patterns in the life cycle of American adults. This appears to be particularly true of the baby boomers, whose arrival at the age when people traditionally take greater interest in church affairs has been awaited by some and doubted by others.

Basic attitudes towards religion have been relatively stable in recent years. Behavioral measurements, however, suggest a gradual return to previous patterns of religious practice and belief. Church membership was claimed by 65% of adults in 1990. There was an insignificant increase to 66% in early 1991, but the ranks have swelled to 69% in the latest May 1991 Gallup Poll. This matches the membership averages for the 1980s decade, but still is four to five percentage points lower than the historical highs in church membership found in the era of the 1930s to 1960s.

Attendance in an average week had dropped to 40% in 1990, but returned to an average of 43% by May in 1991. This matches the previous high over the past 20-year period, but it remains to be seen whether this level can be maintained throughout 1991. (Attendance often is lower during the Summer months and in the Fall before the Thanksgiving and Christmas periods begin.)

Compared to five years ago, 27% of the adults say they are attending religious services more frequently than before. An additional 32% say there has been no change in their frequency of attendance. Less frequent attendance is claimed by 38%, and only 2% report they have never gone to religious services.

An examination of the findings on this question shows that those who are more frequent attenders closely conform to the profile of people who are most likely to be church members: residents of the South and Midwest, the college educated, women, and blacks.

Of particular interest is the finding that the 30 to 49 years-of-age group shows steadfast attendance, with 34% reporting increased frequency of attendance and 31% saying they are still going to services as frequently as five years ago.

The Reason Why

In this most recent survey, Gallup asked respondents in an "open-ended" question, without prompting, to state the one or two leading reasons that would account for their increase or decrease in attendance over the past five years. Preliminary analysis of the reasons people gave is revealing.

A person's position in the life cycle appears to have strongest bearing upon frequency of attendance. Young adults, for example, may temporarily leave the church when they go off to school or leave home, but later in life, marriage, children and family formation, reinforced by a need for fellowship and community, give strong impetus to many to return to the church. Some who are older find that handicaps, infirmities and lack of transportation make it more difficult to get to church as often as they like. Others find that retirement has given them more time to enjoy the offerings of religious services, and still others associate advanced age with the wisdom and maturity that leads to increased religious participation.

Very few have turned away from religious belief because of atheism or agnosticism, and they are far outnumbered by those who say they have found new strength through faith, belief, spirituality, or prayer.

Many who have stopped going as frequently in the past can only offer the excuse that they are too busy. Others perhaps more legitimately point out that church schedules too

(continued on page 2)

The illuminated capital letters in this month's issue are taken from a German Gothic revival alphabet of the 1880's.

Life Cycle Changes...

(continued from page 1)

often are in conflict with weekend working hours or the relentless pressures of business or studies. Yet, there are others who view church as a place where, in the midst of life's troubles, inner peace can be found so that they can feel good about themselves.

There are some who have been disillusioned by the scandals of recent years and what they see as money grubbing aspects of the church, but they are outnumbered by those whose disagreement is an aspect of their spiritual journey as they dissent with the teachings of their denomination or seek a local place of worship that more closely reflects their views. For some the church may be too liberal; for others it seems too conservative. Some denounce the involvement of churches in political and social issues; others see the church as a place where hypocrisy and bigotry can rear their ugly heads.

Reasons to be Audited Annually

PRRC and Gallup intend to repeat annually these questions on frequency of attendance and the reasons for increases or decreases. On future surveys, however, respondents will be shown a card of frequently cited reasons. In this way we shall be able to track individual forces working for or against attendance with more precision than is possible through open-ended questioning.

The most recent findings are based upon a telephone survey with a representative nationwide sample of 1,012 adults, 18 and older, conducted during the last week of May 1991. For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Reasons for Going to Church More Frequently

(Based on those now going more frequently than five years ago)

What are the two main reasons that you attend more frequently?

For our children	18%
Worship as a family	11
Now married	1
Now have stronger faith, belief	18
Spiritual reasons, prayer	2
Following Biblical principles	1
I like going, makes me feel good	10
Gives guidance, inner peace, need it	4
Need its support	3
I am older, maturer, wiser	10
Suffered a loss of a loved one	2
I have reformed	2
Survived a life-threatening incident	2
Now divorced	1
Because of the current world situation	6
The fellowship	5
Enjoy the social aspects	1
So much is going on there	1
Have become more involved	4
Now have more time	4
Have greater need now	4
Got back in the habit, returned	2
Retired and have more time	1
Home more now	1
Born again	1
Catholic faith	1
Found Christ	1
Bible study	1
Found a good church	1
Church, pastor have improved	1
Church is closer than before	1
Now work for the church	2
Active in Christian education	1
To help others	1
Other	5

Note: Total adds to more than 100% because some respondents gave more than one reason.

Reasons for Going Less Frequently

What are the two main reasons that you attend less frequently?

Have no time, too busy	19%
Conflicts with work, study schedule	14
Travel too much	1
Disagree with policies, teachings	8
Hypocrisy, bigotry, close-minded	4
Stand on political/social issues	2
Dissident Catholic	2
Dislike the sermons, preaching	1
Doesn't meet my needs	7
Haven't found church that matches beliefs	1
Illness	6
Handicapped	1
Too commercial, money hungry	5
Scandals	2
Move around too much, new to community	4
Too far to travel	3
No transportation	2
Stopped going when left parents' home	3
Too lazy	3
Got out of the habit	2
Can't get up in the morning	1
Don't like organized religion	3
Too old-fashioned	1
Too modern	1
Life style has changed	3
Too old	2
Children have left	2
Tending to small children	2
Interfaith marriage is disruptive	1
Divorced	1
Boring, no interest	3
Not brought up in the church	1
Atheist, non-believer	4
Agnostic	1
Other	9
Not sure	7

Note: Total adds to more than 100% because some respondents gave more than one reason.

Changes in Church Attendance in Past Five Years

Would you say that you attend religious services more frequently now than you did five years ago, or less frequently?

	More frequent	Same amount	Less frequent	Never went	No response
National	27%	32%	38%	2%	1%
Male	22	34	40	4	*
Female	32	30	36	1	1
Ages 18-29	30	17	50	3	-
Ages 30-49	34	31	33	2	*
Age 65+	19	42	35	3	1
College graduates	29	36	31	3	1
Some college	28	33	36	2	1
High school graduates	26	33	39	2	-
Non-H.S. graduates	26	26	44	3	1
White	26	33	37	3	1
Black	30	24	44	2	-
East	23	33	41	3	*
Midwest	28	33	36	3	-
South	33	31	35	1	-
West	22	32	40	4	2
$50,000+	29	31	38	2	*
$30,000-$39,999	28	33	38	1	*
$20,000-$29,999	27	36	32	5	-
Less than $20,000	27	28	44	1	-
Protestant	31	32	36	1	*
Catholic	26	34	39	1	*
None	4	29	46	21	-

*Less than one-half of 1 percent.

Recent Trends

How important would you say religion is in your own life--very important, fairly important, or not very important?

Do you believe that religion can answer all or most of today's problems, or that religion is largely old-fashioned and out of date?

Do you happen to be a member of a church or synagogue?

Did you happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days or not?

	1990	March 1991	May 1991
Importance of religion			
Very important	56%	55%	57%
Fairly important	30	29	30
Not very important	13	16	13
Can religion answer today's problems?			
Yes	63%	60%	59%
No	18	23	22
Church membership			
Yes	65%	66%	69%
No	34	33	31
Attended services in last seven days			
Yes	40%	43%	43%
No	60	57	57

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100 Questions and Answers by George Gallup, Jr. and Sarah Jones. A single-volume compendium of the 100 most important questions we have surveyed in the area of religion. A handy reference tool in book size format that categorizes and analyzes key survey data. Price per copy is $30.

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If you would like to place an order, please include $2.00 for postage and handling. If you would like to receive more information about these publications, contact the Princeton Religion Research Center, 47 Hulfish Street, P.O. Box 389, Princeton NJ 08542. Telephone (609) 921-8112.

Religion Has Early Impact on Teen Volunteering and Giving

Religion would appear to have an early impact upon voluntarism and charitable giving, according to the findings of a survey conducted by Gallup for the Independent Sector. Among the 75% of teens who reported that they were members of religious institutions, 62% were also volunteers, and 56% were charitable contributors. By contrast, among those who reported no religious affiliation, far fewer were either volunteers (44%) or contributors (25%).

Indeed, beyond just membership, active involvement in religious organizations has an even greater impact on teen philanthropy. The proportion of the teen population that volunteered increased from 34% among the 16% of respondents who never attended religious services to 73% among the 41% who said they attend religious services weekly. Similarly, the proportion who made charitable contributions increased from 17% among non-attenders to 69% among regular weekly attenders.

When these percentages are translated into hours and dollars, the impact is enormous. It is estimated that teen volunteers donate an annual total of 1.6 billion hours in voluntary service. Even when such informal activities as babysitting for free or baking cookies for a school fair are eliminated, the estimate of formal voluntary services is 1.2 billion hours. These hours are estimated by Independent Sector to represent the services of 766,000 employees, valued at $4.4 billion.

When asked how they got involved in their volunteer activity, the majority of teens said it was either through the schools (52%) or through a church or synagogue (50%).

The most frequently cited reasons by teens for first volunteering and for continuing to give service were that they wanted to do something useful in their lives and because they felt they would enjoy the work. In return, teens were most likely to cite that as a result of their service they acquired such skills as getting along with and relating to other people (32%), how to be kind, helpful and respectful (20%), learning how to take care of children (14%), and feeling better about themselves (12%).

The great majority of teens (85%) rated their experience as volunteers as good or very good. Less than 1 percent said their voluntary experience was not good at all. Not surprisingly then, 53% of the teen volunteers said they are now volunteering more hours than they did two years ago.

Among those who reported charitable contributions, the annual average of all donations is $46. Three in four (77%) of the teens channeled their contributions through a religious organization.

The findings are based on personal interviews with a nationwide sample of 300 teen-agers, 14 through 17, conducted by Gallup during the period of March to April 1990.

The survey was sponsored by the Independent Sector. Copies of the full report, **Volunteering and Giving Among American Teenagers 14 to 17 years of Age**, are available in various formats from Independent Sector, 1828 L Street, N.W., Washington DC 20036.

Profile - Teen Volunteers and Givers

	Teen volunteers	Teen contributors
National	58%	48%
Male	51	46
Female	65	51
East	56	51
Midwest	66	52
South	50	54
West	62	31
Protestant	62	64
Catholic	60	51
All others	48	44

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Future Projects

Here is an advance look at the books and reports you can expect to see from PRRC in the coming year.

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The PRRC Survey Research Manual will enable local congregations to conduct their own accurate low-cost surveys on the issues they face.

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PRRC Style Guide for Writers on Religion is being compiled to aid those who write about religion for inter-faith, inter-denominational, or lay audiences.

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The New Age: Magic, Science, or Religion? will present an in-depth report on how Americans view a wide range of New Age beliefs and practices.

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The Religious Life of Young Americans is being developed by the Gallup International Institute to provide a much needed compendium of recent survey research on the religious attitudes of young people, ages 12-24.

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Librarians and others soon will be able to subscribe to current and back files of the Gallup Religion Poll. The library community should be happy to learn that we are busy assigning ISBN and ISSN designators to all past, current and future PRRC publications.

Here Come the Baby Boomers!

By now we assume just about everyone has heard or read about the baby boomers and the impact they are likely to have on organized religion. Born in the post-World War II era between 1946 and 1964, they are now 26 to 45 years of age, and account for nearly half of the U.S. adult population (43%). This means they are now at the age when people historically have usually become most active in the affairs of the church as a center for educating children and integrating the family in the fabric of the local congregation. If the pattern holds true, many churches can expect their ranks to swell if the age group is present in the community. If, however, for some reason the baby boomers do not turn to the church, the outlook for many local congregations could be bleak.

A Gallup Poll taken earlier this year suggests strongly that the baby boomers will be no exception to the historical trend, but will soon start taking their place in churches, synagogues and mosques throughout the land if they have not done so already.

The baby boomers usually see their work as very important but seldom view it as an end in itself. They hope to peak early and to slow down or retire at an age when they can devote themselves fully to family, friends, religion, a search for the meaning of life, and simply having fun and recreation.

There is no sign of the gloom and doom prophesies of "diminished expectations" by some forecasters that this generation will expect and have to settle for less than their parents. They want it all, and they expect to get it all. Compared to their parents, most boomers expect they eventually will be better off financially, have a more satisfactory personal life, and lead a happier family life.

"*All*" for the baby boomers centers around family life—forget about the forecasts that the nuclear family is dead. Individually, it is clear boomers will be undergoing a great deal of soul-searching in the next few years, and probably beyond. They want to know the meaning of life, but most reject New Age or alternative beliefs to attain this insight, and focus upon religion instead.

Boomer men now lag behind their female counterparts in current ratings on the importance of religion of their lives, but both sexes usually see religion as becoming more important in the next five years. Those expecting to spend more time with religious activities in the future far outweigh the boomers who anticipate less time. Formal religious affiliation is slightly lower than the overall average for adults, but there is every indication that more boomers will join the church in the next years. Children undoubtedly are a driving force in bringing boomers to the church, because most want them to receive a religious education.

Levels of Bible reading and study, prayer and meditation, and activity in the church in their lives are all expected by baby boomers to hold steady or increase over the next five years as important parts of their lives.

The results are based on telephone interviews with a randomly selected national sample of 477 adults, ages 26-45, conducted February 21-24, 1991.

Religious Activity in Next Five Years

	Boomer men	Boomer women
Prayer/meditation		
More	41%	43%
Same	52	51
Less	7	5
Attending services		
More	36%	39%
Same	56	56
Less	8	5
Bible/religious study		
More	26%	30%
Same	54	54
Less	19	13
Bible reading		
More	40%	41%
Same	49	49
Less	11	8
Prayer groups		
More	23%	27%
Same	51	48
Less	24	22
Active in church		
More	38%	37%
Same	54	53
Less	8	9
Exploring New Age and other alternatives		
More	12%	11%
Same	33	39
Less	44	41

Boomers and Religion

	Boomer men	Boomer women
Importance of Religion		
Very important	39%	58%
Fairly important	42	31
Not very important	18	11
Importance next 5 years		
More important	61%	66%
Same	25	20
Less important	13	12
Time you will spend on religious activities next 5 years		
More time	37%	44%
Same amount	55	52
Less time	7	3
Church Member?		
Yes	61%	69%
No	39	31
Non-members expecting to join next 5 years		
Yes	38%	39%
No	55	57
Not sure	7	4
Want children to receive religious education?		
Yes	73%	78%
No	17	15
Not sure/not applicable	10	7

Implications

Examination of the reasons people give for attending religious services more or less frequently than in the past, may offer some ideas on how to help others to become more involved in the affairs of the local congregation. You may wish to read the results on pages 1-3 with this in mind, and see what insights you can generate from the findings. Please share your ideas with us by writing to the **Editor, Emerging Trends, Princeton Religion Research Center, 47 Hulfish Street, P.O. Box 389, Princeton, NJ 08542.** *We will publish and acknowledge the most interesting ideas in a forthcoming issue. To help you get started, we list below some of the reflections we had as we reviewed the survey findings.*

- Because most states and communities have abandoned "blue laws," many people now are working during traditional Sunday morning hours or shortly thereafter. Non-traditional worship service hours could be welcome alternatives in some communities.
- In a recessionary economy many people must hold down two or even three jobs to make ends meet. Students who fall asleep during classes because they work long hours to pay tuition costs or help the family's economy may also be excused if they consider Sunday a day of rest and nothing more. What can the church do to help?
- Many women today want both a family and a career. How are our churches meeting these greater demands upon their time and what it does to the traditional family?
- Some people who say they dislike "organized religion" may only be rebelling against large churches. Can small groups within the church better meet their spiritual needs?
- It is painful when people leave a church because of disagreement with its teachings or doctrines. It is comforting to know they may find another church that meets their needs. Just as others left their previous church because your congregation was more to their liking.
- Not only is youth wasted on the young, education may also be as well. We tend to forget that as people mature, they become more receptive to advanced studies in religion.
- Can you think of someone who will not be able to go to church this weekend unless you offer him a ride?
- Young people are marrying and forming families at a later age. Their need for family identity and community fellowship can be all the greater for that reason. Because they have been single longer, we must be patient as they learn to achieve unity again.
- There are many single parents and even more children of single parents. Are churches including them in their plans and in their definitions of families?
- Radical changes in one's life, crisis, or loss may not only require consolation and contemplation, but can trigger a spiritual awakening that if nourished can lead to wondrous things.

EMERGING TRENDS is published monthly except July and August by the PRINCETON RELIGION RESEARCH CENTER. The Center, founded in 1977, is an inter-faith non-denominational research organization with headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. The PRRC specializes in creative actionable research, utilizing the world-wide attitudinal and behavioral facilities of Gallup International. The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the United States and abroad and to explore ways this information can enable religious leaders to promote spiritual growth. A one-year subscription can be obtained for $35.00. Inquire: **Publications Department, P.O. Box 389, 47 Hulfish Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08542 (Telephone 609/921-8112). PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGE.**

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PRRC emerging trends

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Trends in Religious Preference Continue to Evolve Slowly

One would not expect to see religious preferences change radically from year to year, but the final audit for 1990 shows that while the major faiths have maintained their strength relative to one another, subtle changes are continuing to take place in the religious composition of the people of the United States. Overall, 89 percent of adults now state a religious preference. The 11 percent who say they have no preference is the highest figure recorded since Gallup started measuring religious preferences in 1947. This figure should not be interpreted, however, as standing for those who have *no* religion, because it undoubtedly includes some people who are still "shopping around" for a congregation to call their own, or who have eclectic religious preferences, or who belong to a group that is unaffiliated with a particular denomination or faith. The evidence from other surveys suggests that atheists and agnostics together account for a maximum of only five percent of the U.S. adult population.

The majority of Americans are Protestants, with 56 percent naming a Protestant denomination as their preference in the past three years. Protestants have shown a long term decline from their record high of 70

(continued on page 2)

Religious Preferences

	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	Other	None
- Yearly -					
1990	56%	25%	2%	6%	11%
1988-89	56	28	2	4	10
1987	57	28	2	4	9
1986	58	27	2	4	9
1985	57	28	2	4	9
1984	57	28	2	4	9
1983	56	29	2	4	9
1982	57	29	2	4	8
1981	59	28	2	4	7
1980	61	28	2	2	7
1979	59	29	2	2	8
1977-78	60	29	2	1	8
1976	61	27	2	4	6
1975	62	27	2	4	6
1974	60	27	2	5	6
- By 5-year Periods -					
1972	63	26	2	4	5
1967	67	25	3	3	2
1962	70	23	3	2	2
1957	66	26	3	1	3
1952	67	25	4	1	2
1947	69	20	5	1	6

Note: Results for some years do not add to 100% because of rounding.

Trends...

(continued from page 1)

percent in 1962. It is believed that much of the Protestant decline has been occurring among the so-called "mainline churches," while more fundamentalist and evangelical denominations have been holding their own or even growing.

One American in four (25%) is a Roman Catholic by preference. The Roman Catholic faith showed greater strength during the 1970s and '80s, but may now be losing adherents (see accompanying article).

Jewish adherents have accounted for two percent of the adult population for the past two decades.

Records for the four-decade trend are shown on the accompanying table. Specific figures for groups such as the Mormon and Orthodox Churches are omitted because of insufficient historical data, and are included under the "other" category.

Their findings on religious preference in this issue are based on 30,233 interviews with representative nationwide samples of men and women, ages 18 and older, taken throughout 1990. For findings based on samples of this size, one can say with 95 percent confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be 1 percentage point in either direction.

It is important to understand that the results are the stated religious preferences of the respondents. Church officials, local or national, often use other criteria in determining membership, and as a result may often show different counts of their adherents and of their representation in the overall U.S. population.

Catholic Membership Dwindling?

Final figures for the Gallup Polls of 1990 show that the religious preference of one adult in four (25 percent) was "Roman Catholic." This represents a three percentage-point drop from 28 percent who claimed allegiance to the Catholic church during the period of 1987-1989. For the past two decades Catholic preference claims have ranged between 27 to 29 percent of U.S. adults. The current 25-percent level in this country is the lowest recorded by Gallup since 1967.

On the surface it would appear that the future for the Catholic church is promising because more young people state the Catholic church as their preference than is true for those who are older. Three in 10 of those who are under 30 years of age (30%) say they are Catholics. Over 30, the proportion of Catholics drops to 24 percent of the adult population, and to 21 percent of those who are 65 and older. Unfortunately for the Catholic church this pattern appears to be an historical constant for Catholics in the U.S. While other faiths and denominations usually have gained adherents as people grow older, the Catholic church historically instead has lost many of its followers. Demographics may be working against the Catholic church in "the greying of America" as the baby boomer population shifts from being predominantly younger to one that is predominantly older.

Regionally, the Catholic church shows greater strength in the East (39%) and Midwest (26%) than in the western (22%) or southern (14%) regions of the country.

When the demographics of Catholics are studied it is found that, contrary to previous images of its lower class "ethnic" origins, the Catholic church in the U.S. now is solidly middle class. It claims a higher proportion of the nation's college graduates (25%) than of its high school drop outs (20%), and more upper-income (28%) households than those in the lowest income bracket (20%).

	1990
TOTAL CATHOLICS	25%
Sex	
Male	24
Female	25
Age	
18-29	30
30-49	24
50-64	23
65 and older	21
Region	
East	39
Midwest	26
South	14
West	22
Education	
College graduate	25
Attended college	26
High school graduate	26
Not high school graduate	20
Annual household income	
$50,000 & over	28
$30,000-$49,999	27
$15,000-$29,999	25
Under $15,000	20

Majority of Americans are Protestants

The majority of American adults (56%) name one of the Protestant denominations as their religious faith. While they may dominate in numbers, the popular image of Protestants, particularly white males ("WASPs"), as members of the American establishment, overlooks the heavy representation of the Protestant faithful among lower-middle and middle-class Americans. Yes, there certainly are many upper-class white males who are Protestants, but they are frequently outnumbered by those from other backgrounds.

More women (58%) than men (54%) declare themselves to be Protestants. Over half of America's whites (56%) are Protestants, and so are three in four of its black citizens (74%). Protestants represent 52 percent of the households that earn $50,000 or more a year, but 63 percent of those with less than $15,000 annual income. Half of the nation's college graduates (51%) are Protestants, but so also are 64 percent of its high school dropouts.

There are so many Protestants in the South (72%) and portions of the Midwest (59%) that the region has come to be known as the "Bible Belt."

Protestantism increasingly attracts adherents as people grow older. Less than half of young adults under 30 years of age declare themselves to be Protestant, but by age 65 their ranks have swelled to 67 percent of the population.

	1990
TOTAL PROTESTANTS	56%
Sex	
Male	54
Female	58
Age	
18-29	46
30-49	55
50-64	64
65 and older	67
Race	
White	56
Black	74
Region	
East	42
Midwest	59
South	72
West	48
Education	
College graduate	51
Attended college	53
High school graduate	58
Not high school graduate	64
Annual household income	
$50,000 & over	52
$30,000-$49,999	55
$15,000-$29,999	58
Under $15,000	63

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Protestant Turnout Was Light in '90 Elections

NEW YORK - Exit polls consist of randomly selecting samples of voters as they leave the polling place and asking them how they voted and about their demographic and behavioral characteristics. These data enable political scientists to analyze how the factors and issues in elections may have influenced various segments of the electorate. In 1990 for the first time the major television networks, together with major newspapers such as *The New York Times*, pooled their resources to conduct exit polls across the country. Over 9,000 voters were interviewed as they left the polls at 245 randomly selected places in the United States and were queried about their votes in the '90 congressional election. The final figures for the exit polls were released this past Summer and show that although Protestants accounted for about 56% of the adult population in 1990, according to Gallup Polls taken throughout the year, but they represented just 45% of the electorate that year. Similarly, only 11% of the voters would classify themselves either as Protestant fundamentalists or as evangelicals. (In recent years over twice as many adults, mostly Protestants, classified themselves in similar ways.) Catholics represented 24% of the electorate, which is close to their 25% representation in the overall adult population. Jews represented 3% of the voters, compared to 2% of the adult population. Protestants tended to favor Republican congressional candidates, Catholics divided their votes fairly evenly between the two major parties, and Jews usually favored Democrats in the 1990 elections.

In what religion were you brought up?

	Total voters	Voted for Democrat	Voted for Republican
Protestant	48%	43%	56%
Catholic	29	31	26
Other Christian	11	11	9
Jewish	4	5	2
Something else	3	4	2
None	3	3	2
No response	2	3	3

Your religious preference today?

	Total voters	Voted for Democrat	Voted for Republican
Protestant	45%	41%	52%
Catholic	24	25	22
Other Christian	11	12	11
Jewish	3	5	2
Something else	5	7	4
None	7	8	6
No response	5	2	3
Fundamentalist or Evangelical Christian	11	8	15

Where Are the Muslims in the United States?

Muslims have been prominently featured by the nation's secular press for the past two or three years because of the events in the Persian Gulf War, their increased presence because of changes in the immigration laws, and because of the striking minarets that have been taking their place on major urban skylines. Frequently accompanying these stories about Muslims are estimates (almost invariably unattributed) that the adherents of Islam now account for two to five percent of the total U.S. population-and growing.

If these estimates were true, they would represent an important development in the evolution of the social and religious fabric of our nation. Jews in recent years, for example, have represented only about two percent of the total population, by comparison. Apart from any social changes, the political impact that a Muslim community that was equal to or larger than the Jewish community would have upon the U.S. could be staggering.

Naturally, Gallup and other research organizations have wanted to examine this growing Muslim presence more closely. However, after a year's attempt throughout 1990 to accumulate a sufficient

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Muslims...

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number of interviews to be analyzed with statistical reliability, there simply were not enough Muslims to be found.

To be exact: only two-tenths of 1 percent of the 30,000 plus respondents interviewed by Gallup in the course of 1990, stated the Muslim or Islamic faith as their religious preference. Even American Hindus, who receive minuscule attention from the secular press, show up at the higher rate of three-tenths of 1 percent. (This difference, however, is not statistically significant.)

Various reasons for the discrepancy between the poll results and the large estimates have been suggested, but have been found wanting. First, there does not appear to be a "house effect;" that is, a bias peculiar to a particular polling firm, because other polling organizations apparently have been achieving similar results in their attempts to find Muslim samples. Language difficulties could lead to some underestimation, but that would not explain why more people declare themselves to be Hindus than Muslims by preference. The Gallup interviews were conducted both in person and by telephone, so that there would not appear to be a methodological bias. Muslims in this country, if anything, generally are considered more upscale and more articulate than average, so that there would not appear to be sampling or response-rate biases present. In the absence of contradictory evidence, we have to go along with the survey evidence, and estimate that Muslims now account for less than 1 percent of the total U.S. adult population.

The illuminated capital letters in this month's issue are from a Sixteenth century alphabet printed in Paris by Jehan de Roigny.

Religion Ranks Low on Scale of Values of Many Prep School Seniors

Private preparatory schools, contrary to past images of austere places where heavy emphasis is placed on chapel attendance and strict moral codes, now are largely populated by students who may often show little interest in religion and who may be struggling to acquire moral guidelines by which to live. Although most American teen-agers (95%) believe in God, only 57 percent of those attending prep schools share this belief. Two teens in three (65%) in the general population think there is life after death, but only 42 percent of the preparatory school students also believe in it. There is a hell where the wicked are punished, according to only 17 percent of the prep school students. Just 29 percent of these students believe "there is a clear moral code established by God."

Most preparatory schools have abolished compulsory chapel attendance in recent years, and as a consequence only one of their students in four (26%) now reports having attended religious services during the seven-day period preceding the interview. Over twice as many teens (57%) from the general population attend services during a typical week, although some may attend because of parental pressure.

The study was conducted among private preparatory school seniors, and nine in 10 reported their values had changed either very much (42%) or somewhat (47%) during the preceding four years of their schooling. Only 10 percent said their values had not changed at all during this period.

The prep school students say they rely most upon their own reasoning abilities (74%), and the views of their parents (70%) and classmates (60%) in developing their ethical, moral and spiritual values. Far fewer identify their teachers (30%) or members of the clergy (6%) as molders of their values. If they had a serious problem, over four students in 10 (45%) say they would turn to one of their closest friends for help. About one in four (27%) would go to one or both of his parents for advice. Only one student in 10 (10%) would seek help from someone associated with his school, and less than 1 percent would turn to a member of the clergy.

Nearly six in 10 (57%) of the preparatory school students say they have a clear-cut set of principles that guide their lives, and even more (78%) say they have a personal code of conduct that they try to follow. When it comes to the future, however, only 18 percent feel they have a very clear-cut set of goals; while 69 percent feel they are going to have to develop the specifics of their future as they go along in life, and 13 percent have little or no idea of their future goals at this point.

Three students in four feel their values are very similar (25%) or somewhat similar (49%) to their parents' values. About two students in three (64%) reject the suggestion that "my parents' ideals are hopelessly old-fashioned."

Nearly half of the preparatory school students (45%) feel they spend more time than other people their age thinking about their values. Only 6 percent feel they spend less time, while 46 percent believe they spend about the same amount of time as others considering their values.

A majority of the students (56%) think their values differ very much from those that were held by students 20 years ago. Prep school students perhaps show a deficient knowledge of history, because they often believe

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Prep School...

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that in comparison to students of the Vietnam era, their peers now are more aware and concerned about international issues, the environment, equal rights, and are more individualistic and liberal! They also point out, however, that AIDS now has a major influence in shaping the values of their generation.

About four prep school students in 10 (43%) say they try to follow a clear set of rules regarding sexual behavior, but a majority (52%) agree that "any kind of sexual activity is OK so long as nobody gets hurt." Young women at preparatory schools are more likely than young men to say they attempt to follow a clear set of rules regarding their sexual behavior, by a margin of 50 percent to 37 percent.

The findings are based on self-administered questionnaires completed during May 1991 by 404 graduating seniors from five private preparatory schools. The study was conducted by The George H. Gallup International Institute for the Institute on Values at St. Paul's School.

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Gallup Religion Poll Subscriptions Now Available Through PRRC

The Gallup Religion Poll is a weekly newspaper column by George Gallup, Jr. and Robert Bezilla that is distributed nationally by the Los Angeles Times Syndicate. It presents up-to-date findings on surveys on religion. While written primarily for the lay reader, the weekly format provides timely, in-depth coverage of topics that may also be of interest to **Emerging Trends** readers, and can be a welcome addition to library collections of surveys on religion. Annual indexes by topic will be provided at the end of the year. The column will soon be celebrating its fifth anniversary, and microfilm editions for past years are now in preparation.

For those who do not have access to this valuable resource, subscriptions can be obtained directly from PRRC at an annual cost of $150 for 52 issues and the annual index. Orders may be sent to Princeton Religion Research Center, 47 Hulfish Street, Princeton, NJ 08542, or may be telephoned to (609) 921-8112. Please also let us know if you would like to be kept informed about the forthcoming microfilm editions.

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Mega Churches or Small Groups?

Management consultant, Peter Drucker, and public opinion pollster, George Gallup, Jr., presented contrasting visions of large and small church groups at the Leadership Network conference in Denver this past August.

Robert Buford, chair of the foundation, set the problem by asserting that "there's more similarity between a large Presbyterian, Catholic, Methodist, or even a nondenominational charismatic church, than there is between any of them and a small church in the same denomination. The mission of the church may be different from that of a particular nonprofit institution, but the management issues are not."

Drucker stated that "large pastoral churches are the healthiest social institutions in this country right now." He went on to say that "nonprofits need management skills far more than do profit organizations, because they have no conventional 'bottom line.' This is particularly true for churches: the well-run churches are way ahead of practically all businesses."

According to Drucker, "people are bored with theology and are turning to 'pastoral churches,' the kind of church that asks, 'What do these people want that we can give?' rather than 'How can we preserve our denominational distinctiveness, our doctrines?'"

"Social Chistianity is contemptuous, and fortunately does not exist the way it once did. People [now] are in church because they want to be, not because it is the socially acceptable thing to do. Large churches are doing what industry used to do 30 years ago: as employers they are helping their employees with emotional and personal problems." Drucker was quick to add that he was dubious about churches assuming too much responsibility in areas where they are not competent, such as professional counseling.

The needs of society are demanding and will continue to be demanding. Drucker advises that congregations consistently ask "Where can we make a difference?" and "How can we serve the mission?" The key questions for pastors or priests to ask are: "What can I do in this organization that nobody else can do? What did the good Lord ordain me for? What are my strengths? Where have I seen results?"

Drucker pointed out that "so many young, educated people are struggling with both ambition and isolation. They need something to offset their intensely competitive, high-pressure, high-stress working environment. This is where pastoral churches are meeting people's needs, and thus are growing in membership."

George Gallup, Jr., while recognizing the vitality of some mega churches, cautioned the participants that "If you remember one thing, remember the importance of small groups as a vital tool of spiritual growth." Much of the success of mega churches is credited to their commitment to having small groups of about 10 people each that meet twice a month. Gallup pointed out that "at a time of acute loneliness and fragmented families in our society, small support groups serve as a powerful antidote to these social ills."

Gallup supported his assertions with research conducted by the George H. Gallup Institute, under a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., which reveals that four Americans in 10 have participated in small support groups. The survey shows that 28 percent of the public is currently involved in such groups that meet regularly and provide caring and support for their members. Another 12 percent have belonged to groups in the past, and an additional 10 percent say they would like to become involved.

"Small support groups can help revitalize churches and synagogues and serve as a vehicle for changing church life from the merely functional to the transformational." The study also showed that six persons in 10 (60%) currently involved in small groups belong to groups sponsored by churches or synagogues.

Gallup commented: "The tremendous potential for both inner personal renewal and social renewal is suggested by the results of this preliminary survey. Large majorities, for example, say that as a result of participation in small groups they are more open and honest with themselves, better able to forgive others, feel closer to God, and are more understanding of persons with different religious perspectives."

God Not Just an Abstract Concept to Teens

Concepts of God extend far beyond mere attestation of belief for most of America's teen-agers. The great majority of teens say they believe God loves them, and a surprisingly high number report they have experienced the presence of God. For Christian teens, the divinity of Jesus Christ is generally undisputed.

Over the years past Gallup Youth Surveys have consistently reported that about 95 percent of the nation's teen-agers believe in God or a universal spirit. The latest survey shows that far from being an abstract concept to teens, the God they believe in is also thought by most (93%) to love them. Very few teens believe either there is no God (2%) or that if there is one, they are not loved by him (2%). The remaining 3 percent of teens say they are uncertain about whether or not there is a God who loves them.

Belief that they are loved by God decreases slightly as teens grow older. Most younger teens under age 16 hold this belief (96%), but among those 16 and older, belief in God's love for them is found among 88 percent.

The belief that they are loved by God appears to reach teens in most walks of life, as measured by their demographical and geographical traits. The belief is highest in the South (96%) and lowest in the East (87%).

All teens who attended religious services during the seven-day period preceding the time of interview, say they did so in the belief that they are loved by God. While those who did not attend probably include many non-regular worshippers, even among the members of this group, 86 percent still believe they are loved by God.

Three teens in 10 (29%) report they, themselves, have personally experienced the presence of God in some manner. An additional 4 percent are not certain if they have ever had such an experience, but two in three (67%) say they never have had the feeling they were in the presence of God.

The incidence of having felt the presence of God rises slightly as teens grow older, from 27 percent among those who are 13 to 15 years of age, to 32 percent among those who are 16 and older.

The greatest frequency of reports of having experienced the presence of God is found among Protestant teens (41%) and young people who attended religious services during the seven-day period preceeding the time of interview (also 41%). By contrast, fewer Catholic youths (27%) or non-attenders (18%) believe they have ever been in a divine presence.

Nearly nine teens in 10 (86%) believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ; that is, that he is either God or the son of God. He is considered to have been another religious leader like Muhammad or Buddha–but not divine–by 6 percent of the teens. A very few teens (3%) hold the opinion that he never actually lived, while 4 percent say they have no opinion on the matter of his divinity or existence.

By definition, all Christians should believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, from whom the very name of their faith is derived, but a few express skepticism. As a result, belief that Jesus Christ is either God or the son of God is held by 96 percent of Protestant teens and 94 percent of Catholic teens, rather than by all, or 100 percent, of the members of these Christian faiths.

Belief in the divine nature of Jesus Christ is highest among teens who live in the South (94%) or Midwest (88%). Comparatively lower levels of belief are found in the West (84%) and East (75%).

Believe God Loves Them

National	93%
Male	92
Female	94
Ages 13-15	96
Ages 16-17	88
East	87
Midwest	93
South	96
West	93
Protestant	96
Catholic	94
Attended church last week	100
Did not attend	86

Personally Experienced God's Presence

National	29%
Male	29
Female	30
Ages 13-15	27
Ages 16-17	32
East	21
Midwest	30
South	33
West	31
Protestant	41
Catholic	27
Attended church last week	41
Did not attend	18

The findings reported in this issue on the religious beliefs of teen-agers are taken from a Gallup Youth Survey study conducted with a national cross section of 513 teens, ages 13 through 17, who were interviewed by telephone.

Teens Often Pray and Read the Bible When Alone!

A popular myth says that teen-agers usually show little interest in religion and only go through the motions of worship and religious study because their parents require them to go to services and Sunday School. The findings of a recent Gallup Youth Survey demonstrate that to the contrary, many teens do not confine their religious practices to formal worship or religious instruction sessions, but also when they are alone will pray or read the Bible at least occasionally.

Three teens in four report praying when they are alone, including 42 percent who say they do so frequently, and 32 percent who occasionally say their prayers when alone. Personal prayer is practiced rarely by 17 percent of the teens, and 9 percent say they never pray.

Private Bible reading is practiced by 13 percent of the teen-agers, and an additional 31 percent say they occasionally read the Bible when alone. One teen in three (32 percent) hardly ever reads the Bible when alone, and 26 percent report they have never done so.

Young women are among those most likely to say they pray when alone (81 percent) or read the Bible privately (51 percent) at least occasionally. By contrast, solitary prayer (68 percent) and Bible reading (37 percent) is less often reported by young men.

Other Gallup Youth Surveys in the past have shown that church attendance and membership usually decline somewhat as young people grow older, but it is significant to note in the survey being reported today that little or no change is found in their private worship practices. Private Bible study is the same for teens of all ages, and private prayer drops only slightly from 76 percent among younger teens who are 13 to 15 years of age, to 71 percent among those who are 16 and older.

Teens living in the South are more likely than those in other regions to say they pray (83 percent) or read the Bible (55 percent) when they are alone. Midwestern teens also often show higher-than-average frequency of solitary prayer (74 percent) and Bible study (51 percent). Prayer drops to two teens in three in the East (67 percent) and West (68 percent), while private Bible reading is even less frequently reported in both the eastern (31 percent) and western (45 percent) regions of the country.

Protestant youth (80 percent) are somewhat more likely than their Catholic counterparts (71 percent) to report private prayer. Reflecting the greater emphasis of their church upon independent Bible study, however, Protestant teens more often than Catholics say they read the Bible when alone, by a margin of 52 percent to 34 percent.

Not surprisingly, teens who attended church during the seven-day period preceding the time of interview were highly likely to have continued praying (87 percent) and reading the Bible when alone (65 percent). Many teens who did not attend church during the period did pray (61 percent), but only one in four reports at least occasional individual readership of the Bible.

Non-white teen-agers are somewhat more likely than whites to engage in solitary prayer or Bible reading. In these respects, non-whites lead whites in prayer by a margin of 85 percent to 76 percent, and in Bible reading by 48 percent to 43 percent.

Students doing above-average work at school also more often report private prayer (78 percent) and Bible study (50 percent).

Among academic underachievers, both prayer (69 percent) and Bible reading (37 percent) are less frequently practiced.

	Pray alone	Read Bible alone
National	74%	44%
Male	68	37
Female	81	51
Ages 13-15	76	44
Ages 16-17	71	44
Protestant	80	52
Catholic	71	34

Most People Start Out in Life Believing in Heaven and Hell

Perhaps it is just another example of youthful optimism, but more of America's teen-agers believe in heaven than in hell. For that matter, younger people are more likely than their elders to believe in both of these concepts of the hereafter.

Nine teens in 10 (91 percent) say they believe there is a heaven where people who have led good lives are eternally rewarded. Three percent of the teens are uncertain about whether such a place or state exists, but only 6 percent say they do not believe there is a heaven.

Three teens in four (76 percent) say there is a hell where the wicked are punished. Disagreeing that there is a place of damnation are 17 percent of the teens, while 7 percent are undecided if there actually may be a hell.

Gallup Youth Surveys have shown that comparatively few American teens (29 percent) believe in eastern religion concepts of reincarnation; that is, the belief that the soul or spirit may inhabit other bodies in successive lives here on earth.

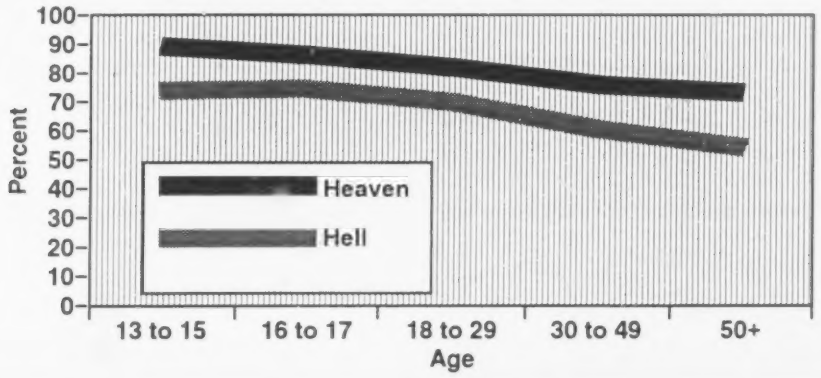
As teens grow older, there is only a very slight drop in their belief in heaven. Among those who are 13 to 15 years of age, 93 percent say there is a heaven, compared to 89 percent of those who are 16 and older. Belief in hell is about the same for both younger (76 percent) and older teens (77 percent). Among adults, belief in the hereafter steadily declines, so that overall, just 78 percent believe in heaven and 60 percent in hell.

Among teens living in the heartland of America, belief in heaven (94 percent) and hell (81 percent) is higher than is found in other regions. Belief in heaven drops to 91 percent of those living in the West and 84 percent among teens in the East. Similarly, fewer western (72 percent) or eastern teens (68 percent) say they need fear a hell.

Religious belief and practice by teens are closely related. Among those who attended religious services in the seven-day period preceding the time of interview, 96 percent believe in heaven and 82 percent say there is a hell. Among non-attenders, belief in heaven drops to 87 percent and hell to 68 percent.

Protestant teens are the most likely of any to believe both in heaven (96 percent) and in hell (82 percent). Slightly fewer Catholic teen-agers believe in heaven (93 percent) or hell (79 percent).

Belief in Heaven and Hell



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Index Shows Religion In America Holding Steady

First reported in the 1990 edition of **Religion in America**, the Princeton Religion Index is an ongoing measurement of eight key religious beliefs and practices of the American public. By combining factors such as belief in God; confidence in religion, the church and the clergy; and church membership levels, an overall picture of religion in America can be obtained. Final figures on these dimensions for 1990 show that the index now stands at 651–just about where it has been for the past three years. A perfect score is "1000," which obviously would be an unobtainable goal reached only when every person in the country made a total commitment to God and church.

The decade of the 1980s saw a slow downward trend in the Princeton Religion Index that bottomed out in 1988 and is remaining steady as we enter the 1990s.

The index reached its peak in the 1950s and actually climbed to 745 by 1960 before the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s took their toll on religion. Futher erosion in religious practices and confidence in church and clergy took place during the 1980s as a result of the televangelist scandals and probably because of various conflicts between laity and church leadership during the period.

The preliminary results in 1991 suggest there may be a new upswing in the index, but this can be confirmed only after the results are reviewed later for the total year. Meanwhile, here is how the eight individual components of the Princeton Religion Index fared in 1990, compared to the past.

• Belief in God or a universal spirit is unusually high in America, with levels of belief ranging from 94 percent to 99 percent over the past five decades.

• Since 1947 nine adults in 10 or more say there is a religious denomination or faith that they prefer. A preference was expressed by 89 percent in 1990.

• Opinion of the relevance of religion or of its ability to answer today's problems has ranged widely over the decades from a high of 81 percent in 1957 to a low of 56 percent in 1984. In 1990, 63 percent of those interviewed felt religion answers today's problems.

• Gallup has been questioning people since 1937 on whether they are now members of a church, synagogue or similar place of worship. Claims of membership have ranged from a high of 76 percent in 1947 to a low of 65 percent in 1988 and in 1990. The recent low measurements in both religious preference and church membership do not necessarily mean that more people are turning away from the church, because there also are indications that many people at this time are "shopping around" for a church.

• Confidence in the church or "organized religion" remained steady for many years, but suffered in the wake of the televangelist scandals in the late 1980s when it dropped from 66 percent of the people in 1985 who said they had a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence to just 52 percent who still expressed confidence in 1985. Confidence rebounded somewhat to 56 percent in 1990.

• Similarly, members of the clergy have not been immune to the effects of adverse publicity, as positive ratings of their honesty and ethics dropped from 67 percent to 55 percent between 1985 and 1989.

• A majority of Americans in the past 10 years have rated religion as being very important in their lives (53 percent to 56 percent). Occasional measurements on the same quesiton during earlier decades indicated that the sense of importance probably was stronger in the past. In 1990, 56 percent said religion is very important to them.

• Gallup has been questioning people since 1939 about their attendance at church or synagogue in the seven-day period preceding the time of interview. Attendance was higher in earlier years, but during the past 10 years average attendance has shown little fluctuation. In 1990, 40 percent of the adult population could be found at a place of worship during a typical week.

The findings are based on up to 30,233 interviews with representative nationwide samples of men and women, ages 18 and older, taken throughout 1990. For findings based on samples of this size, one can say with 95 percent confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be one percentage point in either direction. Index figures for some years prior to 1980 are statistical estimates made from existing scattered data.

Princeton Religion Index

Year	Index
1990	651
1989	651
1988	650
1987	662
1986	661
1985	684
1984	669
1983	669
1982	672
1981	681
1980	681
1990	651
1980	681
1970	700
1960	745
1950	739
1940	726

Small Group Participants Report Their Experiences

More open and honest with myself	89%
Feel better about myself	89
Better able to forgive others	86
Helped me to serve people outside the group	85
Have become more open an honest with people	83
Have a new depth of love towards others	77
Better able to torgive self	76
Feel closer to God	74
Helped me to share faith with others	73
More understanding of different religious perspectives	71
Bible has become more meaningful in my life	68
Answers to prayers	60
Healing of relationships	55
Conflict with people in my group	15
Less interested in people outside group	8

See story on page 1 for George Gallup, Jr.'s interpretation of the implications of these findings.

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